

# Creation in the Vedas



# and the Bible

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“Genesis 1”

*Christ on the Bangkok Road: The Art of Sawai Chinnawong* (New Haven: OMSC Publications, 2007), 15.

“Purusha Suktam”

Cited 29 April 2011 Online: <http://sound-hindu-god-photo.blogspot.com/2009/02/purusha-suktam.html>

# **Creation in the Vedas and the Bible**

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# CREATION IN THE VEDAS AND THE BIBLE

## Abstract

The goal of this project has been to better understand the concepts of creation in the Vedas and the Bible for the purposes of better understanding the relationships within each system between the creator and the creation as well as between the various created inanimate and animate objects and beings. The study then seeks to understand the similarities and differences between the Vedic and Biblical concepts and seeks to find bridges of communication between the two thought systems.

Part I focuses on the Vedic texts by highlighting several key paradigmatic creational texts from the Vedic corpus. The texts include the *Nāsadīya Sūkta*, the *Puruṣa Sūkta*, the *Hiraṇyagarbha*, a portion of the Incest texts, the *Skambha*, and the sixth chapter of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. Each of these texts are examined closely in search of each one's own particular contribution to the understanding of the Vedic concept of creation.

Part II focuses on the Biblical excerpts which include Genesis 1, Genesis 2, Genesis 3, Psalm 8, Psalm 104, and Colossians 1:15-20. As with the Vedic excerpts, the Biblical excerpts are closely examined in search of key concepts and particular understandings regarding the Biblical concept of creation and the insights regarding the creator and his relationship with the creation.

Part III focuses on reflection and comparison that highlights the similarities and distinguishing aspects of the two thought systems. Practical application towards better understanding between the two systems as well as practical steps to apply the concepts gleaned from the study are presented in this final section.

## VITA

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*Dedicated to the memory of my dear mother,  
Letizia (Lettie) Stropoli (1934-2007),  
who first taught me about the love  
and sovereignty of my Creator.*

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LouAnn Stropoli  
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## Introduction

### Why Creation Myths?

The presence of myths can be found in nearly every culture. Myths are used to explain aspects of life on earth. They often use experiences from this phenomenal world in order to explain other aspects of life in the phenomenal existence. For instance, a Mongolian myth explains that humans do not have hair because a cat licked it off and then that hair was put on the dog.<sup>1</sup> This makes perfect sense given a cat's tendency to lick its own hair. The Acoma traditions tell the story of a locust who went up into the light when it wasn't supposed to. Since it disobeyed, the locust's punishment meant it could not go out into the light for long periods of time and it now has to live in the ground.<sup>2</sup>

Cultures sense a distance from the being that is considered supreme. Many of them have myths that seek to explain this dilemma. In a myth of the Burundi tribe in Africa, the creation myth tells of the creation of a crippled baby. The parents were so angry that they plotted to stab God with a knife. When God heard of their plan, he distanced himself so as to not hear complaints about his creation.<sup>3</sup> In a myth from the Wapisiana and Taruma of what was then known as the British Guiana, now Guyana, the supreme god became very angry when the people found the tree of sustenance and took their own food from it rather than waiting to have their food delivered to them each day. He got so mad that he demolished the tree thereby refused to supply food to the people any longer.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nassen-Bayer and Kevin Stuart, "Man, Mongol Tribes, the Natural World, and Mongol Deities," *AFS* 51:2 (1992): 324.

<sup>2</sup> Daryll Forde, "A Creation Myth from Acoma," *Folklore* 41:4 (Dec., 1920): 370.

<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Parrinder, *African Mythology* (London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1967), 37.

<sup>4</sup> John Ogilvie, "Creation Myths of the Wapisiana and Taruma," *Folklore* 51:1 (Mar., 1940), 66.

In the same manner, peoples all over the world in nearly every culture, if not every one, have myths about creation that describe the beginnings of existence as well as elude to the relationships of creation, those between the creator and created as well as between the created beings and objects. There is something far more significant with creation myths compared to myths about general life. Creation myths are actually considered sacred in many cultures and are often reenacted through rituals.<sup>5</sup> The creation or cosmology myths of any given culture reveal an assessment of the underlying problem of the created order as well as aspects of the “doctrine of God.”<sup>6</sup> Understanding these creation myths will often expose deep underlying principles that guide the relationships in any given culture. As Lincoln states, “the creation myth has become the chief mode of entry into a foreign culture... [it communicates] important social, material, and economic ramifications as well as deep religious significance.”<sup>7</sup> It may not always be clear whether the myth influences the inner workings of society and culture or whether the myth is created to reflect what is present already in the societal relationships. It is most likely a combination of the two, which after so many years of repetition and development is hardly decipherable, but what is clear is that found within the myths are clues to unlocking the deep rooted interworking of societal norms and practices. As Eliade argues:

There is always a central myth, which describes the beginnings of the world, that is, what happened before the world became as it is today... They [myths of origin] reveal how the cosmos was shaped and changed, how man became mortal, sexually diversified

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<sup>5</sup> A. E. Gorospe, “Myth,” in *Global Dictionary of Theology* (edited by William A. Dryness and Veli-Matti Karkkainen; Nlogicalottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 594-95.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Koslowski, ed., *The Concept of God, the Origin of the World, and the Image of the Human in World Religions* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 9.

<sup>7</sup> Bruce Lincoln, “The Indo-European Myth of Creation,” *HR* 15:2 (Nov., 1975): 121.

and compelled to work in order to live; they equally reveal what the supernatural beings and the mythical ancestors did, and how and why they abandoned the earth, and disappeared...Now this primordial, sacred history, brought together by the totality of significant myths, is fundamental because it explains, and by the same token justifies, the existence of the world, of man and of society. This is the reason that a mythology is considered at once a true history.<sup>8</sup>

Although the opportunity for investigation into creation myths is endless and enticing, this present study will limit its focus two textual traditions, the Vedas and the Bible. From each corpus, a small number of pericopes will be extracted and examined for clues that will help make clear the story of creation as well as any foundational concepts that have potential to affect the life of the adherents of each belief system. After reviewing each corpus separately, we will examine the conclusions to see if these texts might also affect the relationships of adherents in each belief system with adherent of the other.

Given the exponential choices of texts from which to choose, combined with the limits of length and time, the choice of the selections will undoubtedly leave important texts waiting on the sidelines for a revisit of the topic. It is difficult to leave aside texts that are also of interest, but the texts that have been selected are chosen because of their direct input regarding the actual process of creation and/or how they specifically highlight a certain aspects of creation that impacts societal relationships. From the Vedas, we will examine texts from the *Samhitās* and the *Upaniṣads* and from the Bible we will examine chapters from Genesis, the Psalms, and Colossians.

It would be foolhardy not to mention my own weaknesses in embarking on this study as well as my own presuppositions. It is impossible for scholars not to bring their

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<sup>8</sup> Mircea Eliade, "Cosmogonic Myth and 'Sacred History'," RS 2 (1967): 174.

history and background into a project such as this. Although every attempt is made to set aside our presuppositions and colored glasses, they exist nonetheless. The background that I bring to the table is my training and beliefs as a Protestant Christian scholar. I may see things in the texts that others may not. That might be advantageous in certain respects, but may also be a hindrance. I will try to balance this temptation by paying heed to observances of scholars of other traditions as I read and process the texts in this study. One aspect of my training that offsets the equilibrium of my observations is my training in the biblical Hebrew and Greek, countered with my very beginning, almost nonexistent training in Sanskrit. I regret that in my observance of the Vedic texts, I have not been able to dig into the Sanskrit meanings of words in these and various contexts in the same way I am able with the Greek and Hebrew. In order to accommodate this weaknesses, I have relied as much as possible on insights regarding the Sanskrit from scholars whose skills complement my areas of deficiency.

Admittedly, this study is more heavily weighted on the Vedic texts. I have purposefully given more time and effort in explaining the Vedic texts over the Biblical texts. The reason for the shifted balance is mainly due to the seminary in which the bound copy of this thesis will be held. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, the degree granting institution for this project, is a Protestant Christian Seminary. A very high majority of readers who will read this thesis are from that tradition and know the biblical texts well. They however, are likely to have limited knowledge of the Vedic texts. Therefore more effort is needed to be certain the Vedic corpus is as well represented as possible. In conjunction with the overemphasis on explaining the Vedic texts, certain kyrgmic concepts of the Biblical texts will be presupposed as supported and

verified such as the fall of mankind, the identity of Christ as the second person of the Godhead, and the doctrine of the trinity.

Although the thesis is more heavily weighted in the study of the Vedic texts, it however, offers a more theological reflective coherency in the Biblical section. Writing and analyzing one's own tradition is a different challenge than writing and analyzing a tradition that is not one's own. Although I have the right as a Biblical scholar to weave together the larger meta-narrative in the Biblical texts, I have not the right, nor the comprehensive knowledge to do so in the Vedic texts, at least not at this stage in my study of the Vedas. Due to that difference, the reader will notice more of a comprehensive theological reflection in the Biblical section of the thesis than in the Vedic section. This in no way reflects a lack of coherence in the Vedic texts, but rather a learning curve in the author's understanding of those texts and how they fit together in the larger Vedic narrative.

Finally, it is important to understand the use of the term 'creation' in this study. The Meriam Webster dictionary defines this word as "the act of creating; especially: the act of bringing the world into ordered existence."<sup>9</sup> The Free Online dictionary defines creation as "a. The act of creating; b. The fact or state of having been created."<sup>10</sup> Although the term 'creation' is often used to denote the orthodox Christian view of creation, i.e. bringing forth the material universe from no prior substance, the actual definition of the term does not require this limited use. Therefore, although the process of the origination of the universe is vastly different between the Vedic and Biblical accounts, the term creation will be used to denote both traditions and will be used in the

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<sup>9</sup> "definition of creation" n.p. [cited 5 May 2011]. Online <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/creation>.

<sup>10</sup> "creation" n.p. [cited 5 May 2011]. Online <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/creation>.

general sense of ‘causing something to come into being’. The particulars of how that creation actually occurs will distinguish the two traditions as the texts are examined.

Given these parameters and explanations, we shall embark on our examination of the texts. As Fee and Stuart note, “The aim of good interpretation is simple: to get at the meaning of the text.”<sup>11</sup> May this study be a simple act of getting to the meaning of the text and then observing how that meaning might impact lives and relationships within and across traditions. With this, we now embark.

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<sup>11</sup> Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981, 1993, 2003), 18.



## Part I: The Vedas

Hinduism, finding its beginnings rooted in India in approximately 3000 B.C.,<sup>12</sup> is a complex and varied religion. The confusion begins with the very term ‘Hindu’, which is of foreign origins coupled with no indigenous counterpart. Its definition, according to Sharma is: “A native of India, a negro, a black Arabian, Indian or Ethiopian...a slave, a thief.”<sup>13</sup> Nowhere in the definition does it mention religious texts or practices. Hindus prefer to refer to their religion as *sanātana*, meaning eternal or ancient. Not only is the term ‘Hindu’ foreign to Hindus,<sup>14</sup> but the very definition of Hinduism presents challenges.<sup>15</sup> The term encompasses a wide variety of beliefs and practices presented in ancient texts that reference a myriad of deities. There are no common creeds that tie these systems together and no common practices.<sup>16</sup> In fact, the myriad of beliefs found under the heading ‘Hinduism’ vary so vastly that commonalities can hardly be found.

Despite the complexity of plots and characters found within Hindu practices and beliefs, the Hindu texts, known as the Vedas, provide a well thought out foundation to the various philosophical systems that rest under the overall umbrella of Hinduism. These sacred texts of Hinduism are divided into two main categories, the *śruti* and the *smṛti*.

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<sup>12</sup> George W. Braswell, Jr., *Understanding World Religions* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Arvind Sharma, “On Hindu, Hindustān, Hinduism and Hindutva,” *Numen* 49:1 (2002), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Walker, *The Hindu World* (2 vols.; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 1:445.

<sup>15</sup> As an example, Julius Lipner presents an array of possible qualifications for what Hindus and non-Hindus have considered essential as part of a Hinduism definition. These varied qualifications include the acceptance of the Veda, the adherence to the caste system, or the inclusion of many various religions all under the head of Hinduism. See Julius Lipner, *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994), 2-4. In *Jesus in the Vedas* Hinduism is referred to as the ‘Religion of the Vedas’ since the author considers acceptance of the Vedas to be the commonality that ties Hinduism together. See A Native Indian Missionary, *Jesus in the Vedas* (London, New York, Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1892), 20. Holdredge notes that “amalgam termed Hinduism encompasses a variety of Hinduisms” See Barbara Holdredge, “Veda and Torah: The Word Embodied in Scripture,” in *Between Jerusalem and Benares: Comparative Studies in Judaism and Hinduism* (ed. Hananya Goodman; Albany: State University Press, 1994), 105.

<sup>16</sup> For an extended discussion on the various aspects and varieties of Hinduism, see Walker, 1:445-48.

*Smṛti*, meaning ‘that which is remembered’<sup>17</sup> refers to a grouping of texts that, although maintain a certain level authority as long as they do not contradict the *Sruti* texts,<sup>18</sup> are secondary in hierarchy to them. They consist of the *Sūtras*, the *Pūraṇas*, and the *Mahābhārata* and have been passed down through the centuries. Although, according to orthodoxy, the *smṛti* texts are secondary in nature and authority, they have significant influence in the day-to-day life of the Hindu. As Coburn states, “...the Hindu acquires his knowledge of religion almost exclusively through *smṛti*,”<sup>19</sup> since the *smṛti* simplifies the *sruti* material and instructs the Hindu on proper application and guides him through life.<sup>20</sup>

The Sanskrit word, *śruti*, means ‘that which is heard’<sup>21</sup> or ‘learning by hearing.’<sup>22</sup> The *śruti* texts are traditionally known as the Vedas, a Sanskrit word meaning ‘knowledge’, ‘sacred knowledge’,<sup>23</sup> or ‘knowledge of truth’,<sup>24</sup> is derived from the root *vid* (‘to know’). Some scholars limit the scope of this term only to a portion of the Hindu scriptures. Most traditionally however, the term ‘Veda’ is used to refer to the entire corpus of writings that include the *Samhitās* (*Rg-Veda*, *Sāma-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*

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<sup>17</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations: The Legacy of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy* (Delhi, ISPCK, 2000), 102.

<sup>18</sup> Dominic Goodall, ed. trans. Introduction to *Hindu Scriptures* (Berkley, Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1996), xx. See also Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (eighth impression; London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1966) 2:495.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas B. Coburn, “‘Scripture’ in India: Towards a Typology of the Word in Hindu Life” *JAAR* 52:3 (1984): 439.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Tennent, *Building Christianity*, 101.

<sup>22</sup> Coburn, 439.

<sup>23</sup> Maurice Bloomfield, *The Religion of the Veda: The Ancient Religion of India* (New York, London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1908; AMS Edition: New York: AMS Press, 1969), 17.

<sup>24</sup> Krishna Sivaraman, “Hindu Spirituality: Vedas Through Vedanta,” vol 6 of *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), 5.

and the *Atharva-Veda* which was added later), the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas*, and the *Upaniṣads*.<sup>25</sup> It is in that tradition that it will be used in this thesis.

The traditional Hindu orthodoxy claims these texts originate from the deity, though this traditional view is not fully accepted today.<sup>26</sup> The text in the Vedas is considered by some to be knowledge that saves “the human being from the predicament of unfulfilled existence.”<sup>27</sup> It is theologized as the *satyadharma*, the way of truth, which sustains all beings.<sup>28</sup> These scriptures were *heard* by the ṛsis (primordial poets). These ṛsis “heard the primordial, divine Word sounding in the background of all existence ... then gave voice to that Word in poetic songs...”<sup>29</sup> which were considered a “verbal restatement or reconstruction of an eternal truth in a new, fresh harmonious way.”<sup>30</sup> As Kaelber states, “The ṛsis are seers in the sacred, visionary sense.”<sup>31</sup> They were men “kindled with divine inspiration, ‘flame tongued’, ‘sun-eyed’ like the gods’.”<sup>32</sup> To many Hindus and scholars, an essential element in defining Hinduism is the elevation of the *śruti* texts to revelation status.<sup>33</sup> Some Hindus contradict this view, however. Muir, for example, states that the authors of the early poems themselves did not consider their

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<sup>25</sup> Tennent, *Building Christianity*, 101.

<sup>26</sup> Max Müller, *The Vedas* (Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1956), 21. Brockington argues that according to orthodoxy, “the Vedas are the sole revelation within Hinduism” See John Brockington, *Hinduism and Christianity* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992), 47. Others, such as Sivaraman, argue that the *Śruti* texts are considered authoritative because they have no author, human or divine. See Krishna Sivaraman, *Hindu Spirituality: Vedas Through Vedanta* vol 6 of *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), 6. For a larger discussion on the authorship of the Vedas see Francis Clooney, “Why the Veda has no Author: Language as Ritual in Early Mīmāṃsā and Post-Modern Theology,” *JAAR* 55:4 (Winter, 1987), 659-684.

<sup>27</sup> Lipner, 26.

<sup>28</sup> Sivaraman, 5.

<sup>29</sup> William K. Mahony, *The Artful Universe: An Introduction to the Vedic Religious Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>31</sup> Walter O. Kaelber, “‘Tapas’, Birth, and Spiritual Rebirth in the Veda” *HR* 15:4 (1976), 343-386.

<sup>32</sup> Jeanine Miller, *The Vision of Cosmic Order in the Vedas* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 13.

<sup>33</sup> Lipner, 3.

writings to be divinely inspired,<sup>34</sup> and therefore they are not to be treated in that manner. Stroup likewise states, “Most of the material of the *Rg-Veda* was probably composed by indignant priests under contract to wealthy rulers to provide the hymns necessary for the solemnizing of the sacrifice.”<sup>35</sup> This latter view, however, is not orthodox within Hinduism, as orthodoxy requires the acceptance of the authority of the sruti texts.<sup>36</sup> It is with the authority and respect given to the Vedas by the orthodox traditions that these texts will be referred to in this thesis.

The dating of the earliest form of ‘fixed texts’ of the Vedas is debated among scholars. Bloomfield estimates that the stabilization of the current form of the texts began around 2000 B.C,<sup>37</sup> while Max Müller, estimates between 1500 and 1200 BC.<sup>38</sup> Still, another estimate given by Goodall dates the earliest compositions between 1300 and 1000 B.C. Despite all the attempts to date these early sacred writings, we still do not know with certainty when the first written documents were created. No matter the date, Hindu scholars date the creation of the earliest collection, the *Rg-Veda*, from before the existence of the world.<sup>39</sup> It is with these understandings that we now dive into the texts themselves to explore the Vedic ideas of the earliest beginnings.

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<sup>34</sup> John Muir, *Original Sanskrit texts on the Origin and History of the People of India, Their Religion and Institutions* (vol. IV of *The Sacred Books of the Aryans*; Delhi, Oriental Publishers, 1972), 240. For a further explanation of his argument, see Vol. iii pp. 128-40.

<sup>35</sup> Herbert H. Stroup, “The Rig Veda” LQ, 4 no 3 (Aug 1952), 196., p 295-307.

<sup>36</sup> R. Balasubramanian, “The Origin of the World, the Concept of God, and the Image of the Human Person in Hinduism,” in *The Concept of God, the Origin of the World, and the Image of the Human in World Religions*,” (ed. Peter Koslowski; Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 11.

<sup>37</sup> Bloomfield, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Müller expands his reasons for this particular dating. See Müller, 17-18.

<sup>39</sup> Herbert Hewett Stroup, “Rig Veda,” LQ 4 no 3 (1952), 295.

## Chapter 1: The *Samhitās*

### Introduction

The *Samhitās*, the part of the Vedas which contains the hymns,<sup>40</sup> the *Rg-Veda*, *Sama-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*, are the oldest and most sacred Hindu texts and are considered foundational *śruti* texts, particularly by orthodox Hindus. The *Rg*, *Sama*, and *Yajur Vedas* are sacred manuals for the Vedic priests. The *Rg-Veda* contains hymns, the *Sama-Veda*, drawing 1474 out of its 1549 verses. directly from the *Rg-Veda*<sup>41</sup>, contains these hymns plus the chants, and the *Yajur-Veda* contains the mantras for the sacrifices.<sup>42</sup> In contrast, the *Atharva-Veda*, which was written later, contains “a collection of various spells and esoteric formulae to aid the worshipper in everything from casting demons out to procuring the love of a woman.”<sup>43</sup>

It is with the *Samhitās* that this journey through the creation texts begins. It is a journey that does not reveal an isolated ‘moment of creation’ by which the world came into being, nor does this journey reveal a particular order of creation. The representation of creation is rather, more akin to a transformative process which, rather than creating from nothing, transforms existing matter and orders it into an “intelligible form”.<sup>44</sup> The development is logical rather than chronological,<sup>45</sup> consisting of continuous cycles rather than a singular act.<sup>46</sup> Through this process, the chaos becomes cosmos, and the imagined becomes visible.<sup>47</sup> Initially confusing, chaotic, and void, the cosmos begins to morph

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<sup>40</sup> Muir, 2.

<sup>41</sup> Tennent, *Building Christianity*, 100.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (London: University Press, 1962), 37. See also, Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 115.

<sup>45</sup> Cassian R. Agera, “Creation in the Nasadiyasukta (Rg Veda X:129),” *SID* 15:2 (2005), 159.

<sup>46</sup> Miller, 63-64.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

into shapes and colors as it comes forth from the very essence of the Ultimate. We will now commence this journey with select creation text found in the *Ṛg-Veda*, the grandfather of all *śruti* texts.

### ***Ṛg-Veda* - Introduction**

The *Ṛg-Veda* is separated from the other three *Samhitās* by a large chronological gap<sup>48</sup> making it unarguably the oldest of the four. The *Ṛg-Veda* contains 1028 hymns that are separated into ten books known as *maṇḍalas*. Of these *maṇḍalas*, I and X contain the youngest portions of the work while II through VII contain the portions most attributed to ancient sages and their descendents.<sup>49</sup> In its entirety, the *Ṛg-Veda* contains 152,826 words and 432,000 syllables.<sup>50</sup> Each one carries significance for those who view this text as sacred. The *maṇḍalas* were originally passed down the generations through sons or students and were later separated into the smaller sections that we have access to today.<sup>51</sup>

According to Bloomfield, *Ṛg-Veda* is not the earliest name for this work. He claims that the earlier name for the *Ṛg-Veda*, *ṛcaḥ* and means “verses of praise.”<sup>52</sup> This earlier name would closely align to the meaning of the present name, *Ṛg-Veda*.

According to Stroup, *Ṛg* means ‘a song of praise’ and *Veda* means ‘holy knowledge.’<sup>53</sup>

The name therefore, would indicate that the *Ṛg-Veda* is a collection of verses of praise.

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<sup>48</sup> F. B. J. Kupier, “Cosmogony and Conception: A Query,” HR 10:2 (Nov., 1970), 92.

<sup>49</sup> Carl Olsen, ed., *Hindu Primary Sources: A Sectarian Reader* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 8.

<sup>50</sup> Müller, 17.

<sup>51</sup> Laurie L. Patton, *Bringing the Gods to Mind: Mantra and Ritual in Early Indian Sacrifice* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 2005), 18.

<sup>52</sup> Bloomfield, 26.

<sup>53</sup> Stroup, 295.

The hymns praise and celebrate the Vedic gods, to whom they are chanted with reverence, awe, love, and confidence.<sup>54</sup> These chants are often with the accompaniment of *soma* the magical drink pressed from the deified plant of the same name. *Soma* is itself addressed in the ninth *maṇḍala* as a deity. Its actual phenomenal identity is debated, but it is known at least that *soma* was a liquid pressed from a plant, possibly Ephedra.<sup>55</sup> Stroup suggests that it was deified because of its “inspiring effect on its devotees.”<sup>56</sup> The gods, especially *Indra*, favored this drink (9.74.9), and therefore the priests also partake of it in their ceremonies and sacrifices.

The hymns are composed of ancient and elaborate Sanskrit which is composed of numerous meters. According to Nicolás, the language personifies “a very elaborate meter... and great literary skill.”<sup>57</sup> They reflect an eternal truth, which was first seen by the *inner eye* of the *ṛsis*.<sup>58</sup> That inner eye more accurately reflects and inner ear as the tradition of the hymns is primarily oral.<sup>59</sup> De Nicolás argues that the *Ṛg-Veda* is a chant, a song-poem,<sup>60</sup> not prose or poetry. Although the reading of the hymns lacks a portion of the original context and meaning, it is a method that offers great insight into the ancient principles captured by the *ṛsis*. It is the method by which we will proceed. Our journey begins with *Ṛg-Veda* X.129, one of the most foundational and prominent of the Vedic texts.

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<sup>54</sup> Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy*, 1:120.

<sup>55</sup> Goodall, “Introduction”, xii.

<sup>56</sup> Herbert Hewett Stroup, “Rig Veda,” LQ 4:3 (1952), 295.

<sup>57</sup> Antonio T de Nicolás, *Meditations Through the the Ṛg-Veda; Four Dimensional Man* (Boulder & London: Shambhala, 1978), 12.

<sup>58</sup> Mahoney, 70.

<sup>59</sup> Tennent, *Building Christianity*, 101.

<sup>60</sup> De Nicolás, 55

***R̥g-Veda X.129***<sup>61</sup>

- 1 At first was neither Being nor Nonbeing  
There was not air nor yet sky beyond.  
What was its wrapping? Where? In whose protection?  
Was Water there, unfathomable and deep?
- 2 There was no death then, nor yet deathlessness  
of night or day there was not any sign.  
The One breathed without breath, by its own impulse  
Other than that was nothing else at all.
3. Darkness was there, all wrapped around by darkness,  
and all was Water indiscriminate. Then  
that which was hidden by the Void, that One, emerging  
stirring, through power of Ardor, came to be.
- 4 In the beginning Love arose,  
which was the primal germ cell of the mind.  
The seers, searching in their hearts with wisdom,  
Discovered the connection of Being in Nonbeing.
- 5 A crosswise line cut Being from Nonbeing.  
What was described above it, what below?  
Bearers of seed there were and mighty forces,  
Thrust from below and forward move above.
- 6 Who really knows? Who can presume to tell it?  
Whence was it born? Whence issued this creation?  
Even the Gods came after its emergence.  
Then who can tell from whence it came to be?
- 7 That out of which creation has arisen,  
whether it held it firm or it did not,  
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,  
He surely knows – or maybe He does not!

**Introduction**

*R̥g-Veda X.129*, the celebrated *Nāsadīya Sūkta*, which means ‘from the first words’, draws our attention to the beginning of this transformative process, which forms chaos into order. The hymn’s contemplation, according to some scholars, relies on

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<sup>61</sup> All translations of the *Samhitās* are taken from Raimundo Panikkar unless otherwise noted. See Raimundo Panikkar, *The Vedic Experience, Mantramantarjārī: An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporary Celebration* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 58.



skepticism and speculation,<sup>62</sup> but the *ṛṣi*'s willingness to admit what is not known, should not be misinterpreted as skepticism. If the reader holds the view that the *ṛṣi* wrote what he heard, then he is simply communicating all that has been given to him not speculating or adding thoughts of his own. Furthering that debate can be left to linguists and historians. For our purpose, however, this hymn is foundational in beginning the process of understanding the Vedic conception of creation. As Werner states, "This hymn is unique in the whole of the Vedas,"<sup>63</sup> but does not represent isolated thinking apart from the Vedic corpus. Rather, it is quite foundational both in the understanding of creation and of key important foundational Vedic concepts. Agers states that as a myth, this text provides "an image and understanding of the cosmos, the universe in which we live and, in particular, the role of humankind and their responsibility to it."<sup>64</sup> Furthermore this text lays the foundation of a beginning without duality and the underlying unity and transcendence of the One. Let us now commence into examining the verses of the hymn.

### Exegesis

The era that this hymn describes is referred to by Panikkar as a prelude.<sup>65</sup> It is a 'time' before time began and before the manifestation of the universe.<sup>66</sup> Vs. 1 states that in this era there is neither Being (*sat*) nor non-Being (*asat*),<sup>67</sup> also translated as existence

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<sup>62</sup> De Nicolás relies heavily on this determination stating, "...no one knows how the world began." See Nicolás, 68-70. De Bary likewise indicates that this hymn ends with skepticism which he states is carried over into the Upanishads. See Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York, London, 1958), 15. Zaehner describes this hymn as "inconclusive". See R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (London: University Press, 1962), 55.

<sup>63</sup> Karel Werner, "Symbolism in the Vedas and its Conceptualization," *Numen* 24:3 (1977), 238.

<sup>64</sup> Cassian R. Agera, "Creation in the Nasadiyasukta (Rg Veda X:129)." *SID* 15:2 (2005), 157.

<sup>65</sup> Raimundo Panikkar, ed and trans, *The Vedic Experience: Mantramañjarī: An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporary Celebration* (Berkley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 54-58.

<sup>66</sup> Werner, 223.

<sup>67</sup> Panikkar and Goodall both choose these terms. See Panikkar, 58 and Dominic Goodall, ed. trans. *Hindu Scriptures* (Berkley, Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1996), 16.

nor non-existence.<sup>68</sup> This first line presents a “neither-nor” relationship where the two opposites are, at this stage, fully together.<sup>69</sup> Scholars have provided some understanding regarding *asat*. In Brown’s definition of *asat* he argues that the “essentials for life and growth were lacking. There were cold, darkness, drought; and the place was without cosmic law (*anṛta*), decay and death marked it...”<sup>70</sup> De Nicolás’ description follows along the same though pattern, though not quite so stark. He states that *asat*, whose verbal root “stands for the act of covering,” represents an “undifferentiated primordial chaos”<sup>71</sup> which is akin to an endless cave that contains no hint of light.<sup>72</sup> It is the kind of metaphysical darkness similar to that which cave explorers speak when they say they are unable to see even their own hand waving in front of their faces. De Bary highlights this rendering in his translation which reads, “In the beginning there was darkness concealed in darkness.”<sup>73</sup> It is in this dark covering that which longs to exist is not permitted the opportunity to emerge or grow.<sup>74</sup> *Sat* is viewed, at least by Brown, to encompass “light, warmth, moisture - requisites for life.”<sup>75</sup> He determines that order and synergy are characteristic of *sat*. Within *sat* lie the seeds of eventual manifestations of life. Griffith, however, sees something slightly more hopeful and less drastic in the relationship between *sat* and *asat*. Even within *asat* Griffith sees “latent potentiality of existence.”<sup>76</sup> All these observations are helpful in trying to gain an understanding of the primordial state of the cosmos according to the hymn. All we really know from the text is that *asat*

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<sup>68</sup> Ralph T.H. Griffith, trans., *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, (ed. J.L. Shastri; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1973), 633.

<sup>69</sup> Stella Kramrisch, “The Triple Structure of Creation in the Rg Veda,” HR 2:1 (1962), 145.

<sup>70</sup> W. Norman Brown, “Creation Myth of the Rg Veda,” JOAS 62:2 (1942), 85.

<sup>71</sup> De Nicolás, 89.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

<sup>73</sup> De Bary, 16.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>75</sup> Brown, 85.

<sup>76</sup> Griffith, 633.

and *sat*, although opposite in meaning and function, cohabitate in the primordial state in such a way that there is no distinguishing them. There is neither existence, or non-existence, being nor non-being. There is simply no duality, no cosmos. This lack of presence is presented in the remainder of vs. one and the beginning of vs. two. Not only was there not being nor non-being, but also there was no death nor deathlessness or night or day.

This is not the permanent state of the cosmos however. The primordial void as has been described is interrupted in the third line of vs. two where it states, ‘The One (*tad ekam*) breathed without breath, by its own impulse.’ Sivaraman translates this phrase as stating that the One is “in the breathless space, breathing on its own,”<sup>77</sup> while Goodall’s translation reads, “That One breathed, windless, by its own energy (*svadhā*).”<sup>78</sup> At this stage of development, no creation has taken place. The text declares that neither air (earth) nor sky, neither death nor immortality, neither day nor night existed at that time. Since no creation has taken place, the *One* simply abides alone,<sup>79</sup> transcendent and sufficient, seemingly able to self-sustain Its own presence, an aspect highlighted by Goodall’s translation, ‘by its own energy’. In the midst of this pre-created primordial state, where nothing either exists nor non-exists, there is the One. Being dependent on nothing outside of itself, not even needing air to breathe, It is transcendent, without manifest of name or form.<sup>80</sup> It simply *is*.

In this prior state, the primordial waters (*āpah*) and darkness cover the expanse (vs. three). It is significant to note that the waters’ covering was complete and

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<sup>77</sup> Sivaraman, 11.

<sup>78</sup> Goodall, 16.

<sup>79</sup> Sivaraman, 11.

<sup>80</sup> Agera, 158.

indiscriminate, further supporting the notion that nothing had been created. The waters and the darkness fully cover everything. It is interesting to note as well that the origin of the waters is unknown. Brown states, “Nowhere in the *Rig Veda*, in the numerous passages mentioning the Waters, is there any remark about their origin.”<sup>81</sup> It is possible that the mention of the waters is used metaphorically to represent the nothingness from which existence had yet to emerge. If there had been no existence and if the origin of waters is not mentioned in the scriptures, then this is highly likely. It is also possible that this myth refers to physical primordial waters that covered and enveloped any possible existence. A presence of such waters would certainly be in continuity with many other cosmology myths in other traditions. In either hypothesis, there was an expanse of waters and darkness over everything.

Vs. 3 continues by noting the first act of distinction in creation. The One emerges out of the darkness by the power of *tapas*. *Tapas*, based on its root, *tap*, can have the connotation “to suffer or feel pain,”<sup>82</sup> but at its core reflects the “notion of ‘heat’ or ‘warmth’.”<sup>83</sup> According to Ager, “*Tapas* (root: *tap*) literally means ‘burning’ but figuratively signifies a spontaneous ‘outgrowth,’ a ‘rushing forth’ of an impulse, a ‘projection’ in existence from the innate power (*sakti*) of the absolute.”<sup>84</sup> In later Vedic texts, refers to austerity or ascetic practices,<sup>85</sup> and is a result of “physical mortification of the body.”<sup>86</sup> *Tapas* is the stirring force found in *Rg-Veda* X.190 as well. It’s content as it demonstrates the power of *tapas* in creation makes it worthy of quoting here.

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<sup>81</sup> Brown, 87.

<sup>82</sup> Walter O. Kaelber, “Tapas and Purification in Early Hinduism,” *Numen* 26:2 (Dec., 1979), 198.

<sup>83</sup> Walter O. Kaelber, “‘Tapas’, Birth, and Spiritual Rebirth in the Veda,” *HR* 15:4 (May, 1976), 343.

<sup>84</sup> Ager, 160.

<sup>85</sup> Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 55.

<sup>86</sup> Wendy O’Flaherty, *The Rig Veda: An Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981), 26, n. 3.

1. From blazing Ardor (*tapas*) Cosmic Order came  
and truth; from thence was born the obscure night;  
from thence the Ocean with its billowing waves.
2. From Ocean with its waves was born the year  
which marshals the succession of nights and days,  
controlling everything that blinks the eye.
3. Then, as before, did the creator fashion  
the Sun and moon, the Heaven and the Earth  
the atmosphere and the domain of light.<sup>87</sup>

Panikkar provides a list of the glosses of the word *tapas* in the translations of this hymn, RV X.190. Among others, they include ‘spiritual fire’, ‘heat’, ascetic fervor’, ‘power of heat’, ‘fervour’, ‘warmth’, and ‘austerity’.<sup>88</sup> Thus, life is related to the generation of heat. When *tapas* is performed in rituals or in austerity it is seen as a reenactment of these ancient creative acts has brought order out of chaos.<sup>89</sup>

It is with the power of *tapas* as described in these various definitions and in the context of RV X.190, that the One comes forth out of the primordial waters and darkness. The mention of *tapas* in the hymn indicates that there was an effort put forth by the One to emerge. *Tapas* is not a passive concept. Energy is used to create more energy. If energy was exerted to create *tapas*, then might that not indicate that there was consciousness and deliberateness about the exertion of *tapas* by the One? Agera argues yes. He writes, “..the minimum we ought to suppose of its (the One’s) nature is that it is a *conscious* reality.”<sup>90</sup> Unless the One is acting only on some instinct (and in that scenario the question arises, ‘From where did the instinct come?’), then supposing a consciousness based on the information given in the text is logical.

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<sup>87</sup> Translation by Panikkar. See Panikkar, 60.

<sup>88</sup> Panikkar, 60, fn 1.

<sup>89</sup> Panikkar, 60.

<sup>90</sup> Agera, 158.

One more consideration before leaving this verse is a viewpoint posed by Werner that the One spoken of in vs.1 is “not quite one and the same thing”<sup>91</sup> as the One spoken of in vs. 3. He states that these two vss. represent “different stages or instances of world manifestation...”<sup>92</sup> Werner’s argument is feasible, but it is also entirely possible that these two verses either a) refer to the same instance presenting a different angle of the cosmos or b) refer to the same instance only at different stages in the development of the creation story. With either scenario it is highly likely that the One referred to here in this myth is the same throughout and that these two verses. serve to inform the reader of different aspects a singular being.

In vs. four we read that it is from *tapas* that desire or love, *kāma*,<sup>93</sup> which is later regarded “as the basic drive that keeps the phenomenal world in being,”<sup>94</sup> rises up from within the *One*. *Kama*, a burning desire,<sup>95</sup> cannot exist without *tapas*. They are integrally linked and they’re interdependency “is one of the universal cosmic laws linking Being and the whole realm of being.”<sup>96</sup> The *ṛsis* indicate here, the beginning of the understanding of the association of *sat* within *asat*, a connection that was unclear in vs. one. The commencement of this desire is the beginning of the One becoming all, or as Sivaraman states, the transcendence transforming into “pure immanence.”<sup>97</sup> *Sat* (Being)

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<sup>91</sup> Werner, 236.

<sup>92</sup> Werner, 237.

<sup>93</sup> Panikkar translates *kama* as ‘love’ rather than ‘desire’. Klostermaier includes the gloss, ‘lust’. See Panikkar, 58; Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 114.

<sup>94</sup> Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 55.

<sup>95</sup> Agera, 160.

<sup>96</sup> Panikkar, 57.

<sup>97</sup> Sivaraman, 11.

begins to emerge from *asat*, and the One comes into existence through this constitutive act of desire,<sup>98</sup> as is reflected in vs. five.

Resulting from *kāma*, a distinguishing line separates what is above from what is below (vs. 5). This is the beginning of the presence of duality and the sprouting of the manifestation of the cosmos. The rising of *sat* begins a demarcation described as “chaos ... becoming cosmos.”<sup>99</sup> The mention of a line of demarcation is not in reference to a physical separation indicating the segregating of the waters and the creation of land, or the separation of sky and earth. This line simply announces the beginning of the duality (or at least the beginning of the impression of duality) in our manifested existence. The example given in the text is the differentiation between ‘Bearers of seed’, which refers to males, and ‘mighty forces’, which refers to females.<sup>100</sup> As Werner states, this verse “introduces the ever present quality of manifested reality, namely polarity which is reality’s inner dynamism, the kind of dialectical tension which can be found on all its levels.”<sup>101</sup> This progression of manifestation began with the *sat* arising from *asat* and continues with lines of demarcation that begins to distinguish the dualities of our manifested cosmos.

In the final two verses of this hymn, the *ṛsis* convey the limits of their understanding with the presentation of unanswered questions. This creation of which they speak occurred even before the creation of the gods (vs. 6) and, as they indicate, no one really knows when the cosmos was created, perhaps not even the highest one of heaven. Their unanswered questions bring to mind the mystery of the One and the details

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<sup>98</sup> Panikar, 57.

<sup>99</sup> Miller, 64.

<sup>100</sup> Panikkar, 69, fn 5.

<sup>101</sup> Werner, 237.

of the origin of the universe. It is not to be interpreted as skepticism,<sup>102</sup> but is rather an admittance of the complexity of creation and its beginnings, and an acknowledgment of the limitations of the created to fully understand all that has preceded this manifested state.

### **Summary**

In summary, this initial hymn has addressed many important aspects of the Vedic concept of the creation's beginning. It has simultaneously laid a strong foundation of foundational Vedic principles. First, this hymn emphasizes that in the beginning, there were no distinctions and no duality. Any dualistic manifestations that are seen in this present existence were absent in the primordial, pre-created state. Further this hymn introduces the foundational concept of *tapas* and *kama* and their interlinking, two concepts that are further developed both in the Vedic corpus and in this study. Finally, and most significant to our thematic purpose, is the introduction of the One. This hymn supplies few details regarding the One. There is no name aside from the neuter, One. Some scholars conclude that this One mentioned in this hymn is the Ultimate<sup>103</sup> or the Absolute,<sup>104</sup> and that It is this One from which the universe will be brought forth.<sup>105</sup> Sivaraman states that this text highlights that all creation is grounded in the One, which is the Ultimate Itself.<sup>106</sup> This conclusion is certainly possible. The *ṛsis*, however chose not to assign any other name in this text other than the neuter, One. No characteristics are given and no commentary on the capabilities of the One are provided. What we do know from the text is accurately presented by Mahoney when he states, "...the dualism of

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<sup>102</sup> Sivaraman, 12; Werner, 238.

<sup>103</sup> Panikkar, 55.

<sup>104</sup> Ager, 158; Werner, 236.

<sup>105</sup> Griffith, 629.

<sup>106</sup> Sivaraman, 11.



nonbeing and being itself arises from an underlying or transcendent unity that subsumes both.”<sup>107</sup> Laying implicitly in this text, some Hindu philosophers find the seed bed of universal unity and non-dualism that lies underneath the present manifested world of distinctions and differences. Whether or not an underlying unity exists even in today’s manifestation (texts examined later in this study will address this concern), what we know from this text is that in the beginning, there was nothing and no distinction. There was one the One, breathing without breath with Its internal energy. From that energy with *tapas* and *kama* the One arose and duality began.

In like manner to the *ṛsis*, the present reader is left with questions. Who/What is this One and from where did It come and when? Is this One the Ultimate and eternal presence igniting the fires of existence in the universe, or is the One spoken of in this text simply metaphorical, giving some substance to some sort of energy force from which creation came forth? Giving credence to the idea that this One was some sort of primordial creator, possibly the Ultimate or Brahman to which later philosophers refer, then how exactly did this creation occur? Of what substance was creation constructed and how does that process of creation impact the contemporary created being? Perhaps the more specific question is whether there was ever a creation of which to speak? Is this text and others to follow, simply recorded to communicate underlying principles of the world and the forces that create our perceptions and experiences in this manifested world? We are left to ponder these unanswered questions. Meanwhile, we shall proceed to the next selection in the study, *Rg-Veda* X.121, the *Hiranyagarbha*, to glean from its insights.

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<sup>107</sup> Mahoney, 58.

***R̥g-Veda X.121 The Hiranyagarbha***<sup>108</sup>

1. In the beginning around the Golden Germ:  
he was, as soon as born, the Lord of Being,  
sustainer of the Earth and of this Heaven.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
2. He who bestows life-force and hardy vigor,  
whose ordinances even the Gods obey,  
whose shadow is immortal life – and death –  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
3. Who by his grandeur has emerged sole sovereign  
of every living thing that breathes and slumbers,  
he who is Lord of man and four-legged creatures –  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
4. To him of right belong, by his own power,  
the snow-clad mountains, the world-stream, and the sea.  
His arms are the four quarters of the sky.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
5. Who held secure the mighty Heavens and Earth,  
who established light and sky's vast vault above,  
who measured out the ether in mid-spheres –  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
6. Toward him, trembling, the embattled forces,  
riveted by his glory, direct their gaze.  
Through him the risen sun sheds forth its light.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
7. When came the mighty Waters, bringing with them  
the universal Germ, whence sprang the Fire,  
thence leapt the God's One-Spirit into being.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
8. This One who in his might surveyed the Waters  
pregnant with vital forces, producing sacrifice,  
he is the God of Gods and none beside him.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
9. O Father of Earth, by fixed laws ruling,  
O Father of the Heavens, pray protect us,  
O Father of the great and shining Waters!

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<sup>108</sup> Panikkar, 71-72.

What God shall we adore with our oblation?

10. O Lord of creatures, Father of all beings,  
you alone pervade all that has come to birth  
Grant us out heart's desire for which we pray.  
May we become the lords of many treasures!

### Introduction

The R̥g-Vedic hymn X.121 is a well known and significant text. It has been known as the “hymn to the unknown God” *Deo ignoto, or Deus Ignotus*, since Max Müller invented this title.<sup>109</sup> This designation attests to the enveloping mystery surrounding the Ultimate. The hymn is also known by the name, *Hiranyagarbha*, meaning the golden-germ, or a symbol of the rising sun.<sup>110</sup> This hymn magnifies this god in several aspects. One aspect is that it gives the reader a further glimpse into the arising of the beginning, a theme that was observed in *R̥g-Veda* X.129. Furthermore, this hymn highlights the god's power over creation as Lord. Finally, and possibly most significant, this hymn affirms the transcendent, yet immanent presence of this god in the universe.

### Exegesis

The Sanskrit term, *Hiranyagarbha*, which is translated as Golden Germ by Panikkar, is also translated by other translators as Golden Embryo,<sup>111</sup> or Golden Womb.<sup>112</sup> Griffith expands on the definition of *Hiranyagarbha* by providing the glosses, ‘source of golden light; the Sun-god ‘as the great power of the universe, from which all other powers and existences, divine and earthly, are derived...’<sup>113</sup> O’Flaherty glosses this term as meaning, “he of the womb of gold.”<sup>114</sup> Whether the term is translated as

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<sup>109</sup> Possibly fashioned after the text in Acts 17. See Panikkar, 67.

<sup>110</sup> Panikkar, 68.

<sup>111</sup> Goodall, 14.

<sup>112</sup> Wendy O’Flaherty, *The Rig Veda: An Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981), 27.

<sup>113</sup> Griffith, 628, rn 1.

<sup>114</sup> Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, “Asceticism and Sexuality in the Mythology of Śiva. Part II,” HR 9:1 (Aug., 1969), 7.

Germ, Embryo, or Womb, the significance of the terminology is that it references a place of inception, a place where life is begun, nurtured, and developed. The use of this terminology indicates that this hymn is either referencing the beginning of this being, or perhaps that this being is in some way related to the beginnings of the cosmos. Given either meaning, there is no question that this being is highly valued and exceptionally significant in the picture of Vedic thought.

The hymn begins by stating that in the beginning the Golden Germ arose (vs. 1) and as soon was born (vs. 2). Goodall's translation reads, "[Stirred and] evolved". The text gives no explanation of the meaning of this initial statement. Is this a being that has been created and is now being born in order to take the place of 'Lord', or is this being already in existence and rises up, i.e. is elevated in stature? It is indeed perplexing.

Panikkar beautifully expresses this dilemma. He states,

We cannot call this first step a creation: God is not created.  
Nor can we call it evolution in the usual sense of the word,  
Nor a becoming, as if God first were not and later came to be.

Panikkar's explanation indicates that he believes this text refers to a God who has eternally existed and has not been created. Though that reading may be supported by the use of other Vedic texts, and may indeed make great logical sense, it is not clearly communicated in this particular hymn. We can assert with confidence, however, that this being to which the text refers, is either the original ultimate being, or a being that is very important and high on the hierarchical scale of the Vedic gods. This scope of this being's influence begins to be described in lines two and three of the first verse. The text states that *Hiranyagarbha* sustains the Earth and Heaven. His power and control are certainly comparable to the highest, ultimate god, for who else could sustain the actual universe.

Verses 2-9 continue to communicate and expand the understanding of *Hiranyagarbha*'s authority and power. Being immortal himself,<sup>115</sup> he is the one who gives life and his commands are to be followed (vs. 2). He is sovereign over 'every living thing that breathes and slumbers' (vs. 3), and sovereign over the entirety of the material world as well (vss. 4 -5). Finally in vs. 10, the last line presents the request common amongst humans, "make us lords of many treasures (riches)." This god not only deserves praise and has dominion over all the universe, but he also has the power to bless and help the one who praises him. Given the confidence with which the statement is given, there is every reason to believe that the Vedic man strongly believed that the god could and would help him obtain the riches he desired. These are extraordinary statements about an exalted, honored, and revered being in Vedic philosophy. Not only does this God become Lord upon his arising, but he is also sovereign over all creation and one whom the Vedic seers saw fit for receiving worship.<sup>116</sup>

Second, an important aspect that draws our attention is the significance and meaning of the line that repetitively ends verses one through nine, "What God shall we adore with our oblation?" First, there are discrepancies amongst scholars as to the interpretation of the interrogative pronoun, *Ka*, meaning 'Who',<sup>117</sup> and how that interpretation changes the meaning of the sentence. Tennent observes that this sentence may be read in two different ways: either a question is being asked, "who is the true god

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<sup>115</sup> Line 3 of verse 2 is translated by Griffith as, "The Lord of death whose shade is life immortal" See Panikkar, 628. Note however, that being immortal (i.e. being one who will never die) does not automatically correlate to 'one who is never born'. In Christian beliefs, God is both eternal and immortal, while humans are born at a particular time into immortality. For this reason I hesitate to agree with Panikkar that based on this text the *Hiranyagarbha* is eternal, having never been born, as well as is immortal.

<sup>116</sup> Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 53.

<sup>117</sup> The neuter 'What' is also a possible translation. See Donald A. Mackenzie, *Indian Myth and Legend* (Boston: Longwood Press, 1978), 98.

to whom I should worship?” which he indicates would reveal a growing dissatisfaction with polytheism, or it is a statement being made which is directed to *Ka*.<sup>118</sup> If the line is interpreted as a question, then the *ṛsi* has no firm knowledge as to which god this hymn refers. He has simply heard details about this god and how It sustains the universe and is supreme over it. Any specifics beyond that are not made known in this hymn and the question is an honest inquiry. If indeed the word, *Ka*, is used as directive, then this hymn addresses a particular being who is referred to with the neuter *Ka*, or *Ka* could stand in place of a particular deity, especially when repeated over and over again. In that instance, it can become the name by which the deity is referred. There is discrepancy regarding this factor between Panikkar and Griffith. Panikkar adamantly declares that the interrogative pronoun is actually the name for *Prajāpati*. What is the name of the God to which this hymn refers? ‘Who’ is his name, according to Panikkar.<sup>119</sup> Griffith, writing one hundred years earlier, states that this assignment of the pronoun is “forced interpretation”.<sup>120</sup> In examining the text itself, it is likely that throughout the hymn, the *ṛsi* is asking the question, “Who is this god?” This repetitive question stirs the heart of the listener and creates a rhythmic build up to the last and final verse (remember that these hymns were chanted not read in Vedic times and their presentation is therefore influenced by the rules of music), which climatically lands in vs. 10 on the word, *Prajāpati*. Therefore, I lean towards the view that in vss. 1-9 the word *ka* is used as an interrogative pronoun only, and not used as the name of a deity.

The positioning of this word, *Prajāpati*, in vs. 10 and its interpretation are also debated amongst scholars. Some scholars argue that the name/title, *Prajāpati*, is an

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<sup>118</sup> Tennent, *Building Christianity*, 109.

<sup>119</sup> Panikkar, 69.

<sup>120</sup> Griffith, 628.

interpolation into the text. They claim that the entire verse was added at a later time and that it did not exist at the time of the original hearing and writing of the hymn. Other scholars disagree and state that the use of the word, *Prajāpati*, is perfectly suited to the hymn and existed as part of the original text.<sup>121</sup> If we accept that *Prajāpati* is the original term used in the text in vs. 10 and that vs. 10 was not added but was a part of the original hymn, as is the best logical choice given the lack of evidence supporting the opposite, the question remains as to whether this term is a title or a name. In the earlier Vedic texts, *Prajāpati* is a title that literally means ‘Lord of creatures’<sup>122</sup> or “creation’s king,”<sup>123</sup> In contrast, in later texts, *Prajāpati* is the name of a deity and is also associated with a deity named *Ka* particularly the *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>124</sup> Therefore, there are a variety of ways that this term is interpreted amongst scholars. Although most scholars see this term as the name of a deity,<sup>125</sup> there is enough evidence to be cautious in doing so. For our purposes in seeking primarily to understand the relation between the creator and the created, this term will be viewed as a title, ‘Lord of Creatures’.

Verse four also demands our attention. Although it can be easily overlooked, this verse makes a compelling statement that lifts this hymn to paramount importance. Line three reads, “His arms ARE the four quarters of the sky.”<sup>126</sup> Goodall translates this

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<sup>121</sup> Tennent notes that Max Müller does indeed consider *Prajāpati* to be interpolated. See Tennent, *Building Christianity*, 109. Griffith, however, gives no indication that he believes this is not the original text. See Griffith, 629.

<sup>122</sup> Panikkar, 72, fn 10.

<sup>123</sup> Walker, 2:232.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Panikkar uses the phrase ‘O Lord of the creatures’, but indicates in the footnote that this is indicative of *Prajāpati*. He states that *Prajāpati*, as Father of all beings, is “explicitly affirmed in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. See Panikkar, 69-70. O’Flaherty and Zaehner both use the name *Prajāpati* without question. See O’Flaherty, 26; R.C. Zaehner, trans., *Hindu Scriptures* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1966), 11; and Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 53.

<sup>126</sup> Panikkar, 71. Emphasis mine.

portion as, “By whose [might] the cardinal directions - Which are his arms, [exist],”<sup>127</sup> and Griffith chooses the translation, “His arms are these. His are these heavenly regions.”<sup>128</sup> There is no mistake in Panikkar’s translation since all the translations presented indicate the same message. The text does not state that this god holds up the four quarters of the sky, it says his arms ARE the four quarters. Tennent interprets this text to mean the Supreme Being is actually, creation itself.<sup>129</sup> As Zaehner states, “he both *is* the universe and the life-force that pervades it.”<sup>130</sup> Further more he states, “Simultaneously, this Ultimate is both a transcendent God and an immanent spirit.”<sup>131</sup> Counter to the view of these two scholars, Smith emphasizes that the creation, although real in commonality with the creator, is not equal in substance as this text might be interpreted to mean. He equates creation as being similar to the human procreative acts. Although the fetus is made from the substance of the parents, the fetus and parents are separate entities.<sup>132</sup> Given either interpretation, this text supports a strong connection and interlinking of the original substance of the creator with creation itself. This theme is foundational to understanding the concept of creation in the Vedic texts as well as the relationships in the Vedic worldview.

### Summary

*R̥g-Veda* X.121 is filled with magnificence and praise to the *Hiranyagarbha*. This god that rose in the beginning, is afforded no lack of praise and the domain of his power was fully acknowledged and celebrated. Even with the textual considerations and debates that surround this hymn, the core elements hold firm. This god rose up in the

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<sup>127</sup> Goodall, 15.

<sup>128</sup> Griffith, 628.

<sup>129</sup> Tennent, *Building Christianity*, 109.

<sup>130</sup> Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 53

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>132</sup> See Brian K. Smith, “Sacrifice and Being: Prajāpati’s Cosmic Emission and its Consequences,” *Numen* 32:1 (July, 1985): 71-87



beginning and is Lord of all creation. It sustains all its creatures and material entities, including the Earth and Heaven. Finally, and most spectacular, is the indication that this god not only supports the creation and is transcendent to it, but is immanent as well.

There are questions that predominate both hymns that pertain to the nature and identity of the creator as well as the specifics of the creation, this hymn nonetheless builds upon the foundational elements of *Ṛg-Veda* X.129. Commonalities include the indication that these texts address the beginning (both hymns affirm this aspect in their initial verses). Second, both hymns speak of the Waters (*apah*). In the *Nāsadīya Sūkta* the *sat* emerges from the primordial Waters (RV 129.3) and in this text, the *Hiranyagarbha* the Waters bring the universal germ (RV 212.7). In a very important step, this text expands upon that foundation laid in the *Nāsadīya Sūkta*. The *Nāsadīya Sūkta* conveys the primacy of this god, whomever it may be as the first arising out of nothingness. Before *sat* arose, there was not existence nor non-existence. The *Nāsadīya Sūkta* determines that out of darkness and nothingness, out of a unity of being, a manifestation of duality began to emerge with the One arising. The *Hiranyagarbha* takes this foundation and moves this study into a significant realm of understanding the unity of the universe being grounded in the essence of the god itself. This concept lies in this hymn only in seed form, but it will be more fully developed as this study moves on now to the *Puruṣa Sūkta*, *Ṛg-Veda* X.90.

***Ṛg-Veda* X.90<sup>133</sup>**  
***Puruṣa Sūkta*,**

1. A Thousand-headed is the Man  
with a thousand eyes, a thousand feet;  
encompassing the Earth all sides,  
he extended it by the fingers' breath.

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<sup>133</sup> Panikkar, 75-76.

2. The Man, indeed, is this All,  
what has been and what is to be,  
the Lord of the immortal spheres  
which he surpasses by consuming food.
3. Such is the measure of his might,  
and greater still than this is Man.  
All beings are a fourth of him,  
Three fourths are the immortal in heaven.
4. Three fourths of Man ascended high,  
one fourth took birth again down here.  
From this he spread in all directions  
Into animate and inanimate things.
5. From him the Shining one was born;  
from this Shining one Man again took birth.  
As soon as born, he extended himself  
all over the earth both behind and before.
6. Using the Man as their oblation,  
the Gods performed the sacrifice.  
Spring served them for the clarified butter,  
Summer for the furl, and Autumn for the offering.
7. This evolved Man, then first born,  
they besprinkled on the sacred grass.  
With him the Gods' performed the sacrifice,  
as did also the heavenly beings and seers.
8. From the sacrifice, fully accomplished,  
were born the hymns and the melodies;  
from this were born the various meters;  
from this were born the sacrificial formulas.
9. From the sacrifice, fully accomplished,  
were born the hymns and the melodies;  
from this were born the various meters;  
from this were born the sacrificial formulas.
10. From this were horses born, all creatures  
such as have teeth in either jaw;  
from this were born the breeds of cattle;  
from this were born sheep and goats.

11. When they divided up the Man,  
into how many parts did they divide him?  
What did his mouth become: What his arms?  
What are his legs called? What are his feet?
12. His mouth became the Brahmin; his arms  
became the warrior-prince, his legs  
the common man who plies his trade.  
The lowly serf was born from his feet.
13. The moon was born from his mind; the Sun  
came into being from his eye;  
from his mouth came Indra and Agni,  
while from his breath the Wind was born.
14. From his navel issued the Air;  
from his head unfurled the Sky,  
the Earth from his feet, from his ear the four directions.  
Thus have the worlds been organized.
15. Seven were the sticks of the enclosure,  
thrice seven the fuel sticks were made,  
when the Gods, performing the sacrifice,  
bound the Man as the victim.
16. With the sacrifice the Gods sacrificed to the sacrifice.  
Those were the first established rites.  
These powers ascended up to heaven  
Where dwell the ancient Gods and other beings.

### **Introduction**

The *Ṛg-Vedic* hymn X.90, otherwise known as the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* or the ‘Hymn of Man’, or as Panikkar offers, ‘This is the man!’<sup>134</sup> is dated amongst the latest of the Vedic hymns.<sup>135</sup> Its singular focus lies in the description of creation resulting from the sacrifice of the cosmic man, which the hymn calls, *Puruṣa*, simply meaning ‘man’.<sup>136</sup> This *Puruṣa* however is not ordinary, for from his sacrificed body the universe comes into being.

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<sup>134</sup> Panikkar, 72.

<sup>135</sup> O’Flaherty, *The Rig Veda*, 29-30. Bruce Lincoln provides a lengthy and interesting examination of this myth in the larger context of Indo-European creation myths. He states that other versions of a myth that display the creation of the world ‘from the body of a primordial being’ are found in traditions in countries including Iran, Greece, Russia, Germania-Scandinavia, and Rome. See Bruce Lincoln, “The Indo-European Myth of Creation,” *HR* 15:2 (1975): 121.

<sup>136</sup> P. Hacker, “Śankara’s Conception of Man,” *SM* 19 (1970), 126.

What was latent in the previous hymns in this study is explicit here: the indwelling of the creator in all of creation<sup>137</sup> and its position as the ‘original source of the universe.’<sup>138</sup>

While purporting this premise, the hymn magnifies the expansive and unlimited presence of *Puruṣa* as well as the significance of sacrifice as it pertains to the creation of the cosmos and it’s result, the comprehensive immanence of *Puruṣa*. Finally, a brief discussion of the portion of the text that supports origin of what has become known as the caste system will ensue. Due to the length of this hymn and the number of important themes present in it, the explanation provided will focus on themes, rather than a line-by-line exegesis.

### ***Puruṣa’s Expanse***

The hymn begins by expounding the enormity of *Puruṣa* who, according to Griffith, is the “embodied spirit, or Man personified and regarded as the soul and original source of the universe, the personal and life-giving principle in all animated beings.”<sup>139</sup> Being made of a thousand heads and feet, and encompassing the earth on all sides, *Puruṣa* extends beyond the earth, which he pervades (vs. 1). He is ‘all’,<sup>140</sup> states the text in vs. 2, and “The Lord of immortality.”<sup>141</sup> The magnificence of his greatness is such that all the beings combined make up *only* one-fourth of him (vs. 3) and he has spread in all directions to include even the inanimate.<sup>142</sup> There is nothing beyond his reach. Emanating from *Puruṣa*, was the ‘Shining one’ (*virāj*),<sup>143</sup> from which men are born,<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Miller, 13.

<sup>138</sup> Griffith, 602.

<sup>139</sup> Griffith, 602, fn 1.

<sup>140</sup> Panikkar, 75.

<sup>141</sup> Goodall, 13.

<sup>142</sup> Kramrisch notes that the symbolic numbers indicate that this hymn represents creation from the perspective here on earth, as opposed to what other hymns represent, a perspective from above. See, Kramrisch, “Triple Structure I,” 146, fn 4.

<sup>143</sup> Panikkar provides these glosses for this term, “the cosmic waters” (Edgerton), “the cosmic egg” (Raghavan), “mother principle” or “yoni” (V.S. Agrawala). He offers this interpretation of the end of vs.5:

and the cycle of human creation begins. It is critical to remember that *virāj*, came first from within the Ultimate. Thereby, the initial substance of the feminine, from whence the masculine are born, is of the same essence as the Ultimate. As this hymn states, *Puruṣa* is in ALL, or all are made up of him. This will become more evident as the hymn is further evaluated, but our current focus in the hymn is the pervasiveness and the broad all encompassing expansion of *Puruṣa*. Nothing existing in the manifested world is beyond his scope and power and control. His presence is all encompassing.

### **Sacrifice**

In the fullness of his massive expanse, *Puruṣa* is the optimal sacrificial choice. Sacrifice, which has been considered to be “the most prominent feature of the Vedic religion,”<sup>145</sup> can be minimally defined as “the act of giving up something in order to receive something of greater worth.”<sup>146</sup> This definition is applicable and accurate, but a far more descriptive definition is provided to us by Clooney when he states, “... the cosmic aspect of sacrifice...has to do with the whole context of reality, not merely the divine-human relationship within the reality. Eventually, the transactional aspect of the sacrifice is subordinated to the action itself in its cosmic significance.”<sup>147</sup> Particularly for our purposes in the study, the cosmic importance of Vedic sacrifice is of utmost importance. Being considered the antecedent of all acts of sacrifice throughout the

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“He stretched himself further ...then he created the earth and the astral bodies.” See Panikkar, 77, fn 5. Griffith offers the explanation that the Shining one is an egg that *Puruṣa* then entered into and animated it as a Divine source. The term may also refer to a female counterpart to *Puruṣa*. See Griffith, 602, fn 5.

<sup>144</sup> Panikkar, 74.

<sup>145</sup> A Native Indian Missionary, 16. De Nicolás describes it as “the sacrificial thread on which all perception is centered of or from which all perception flows.” See De Nicolás, 148. The sacrifice theme is prominent in the *Brāhmaṇas* where *Prajāpati* creates the world in “an act of self-immolation.” He is the “sacrificer, the sacrifice, and the one to whom the sacrifice is offered.” See Panikkar, 52. See also, Panikkar, 72, for samples of *Brāhmaṇic* texts that highlight the sacrificial theme.

<sup>146</sup> Brian K. Smith and Wendy Doniger, “Sacrifice and substitution: Ritual Mystification and Mythical Demystification,” *Neumen* 36:2 (Dec., 1989), 189.

<sup>147</sup> Francis X. Clooney, “Sacrifice and Its Spiritualization in the Christian and Hindu Traditions: A Study in Comparative Theology,” *HTR* 78:3/4 (Jul. – Oct., 1985), 367-68.

Vedas,<sup>148</sup> this text retains a position of significance in an attempt to understand sacrifice as a Vedic theme, particularly in how it relates to the concept of creation. Panikkar refers to this sacrifice as being cosmotheandric, involving not only the *Puruṣa* man, but also the gods and the entire universe,<sup>149</sup> while Gonda accurately describes the significance of this hymn in the Vedic corpus as paradigmatic in its representation of the use of sacrifice in Vedic thought and practice. She makes this statement regarding this text, “This event [the sacrifice and dismemberment of *Puruṣa*] which took place at that archetypal sacrifice represents the transition of the One who was the primeval Totality into the plurality of the phenomenal universe; that is, that sacrifice was the creation of the universe. Of this first creative act every sacrifice is a repetition.”<sup>150</sup> Gonda’s statement further supports the significance of understanding this hymn not only for its own sake, but also due to its underlying presence and meaning in subsequent sacrificial texts and actions.

In RV X.90 the gods’ sacrifice of *Puruṣa* is presented with a description of how his dissected parts were distributed as the material substance of the world. Sacrificed by the gods (vs. 7), the *Puruṣa* man is both the one worshiped (note in vs. 2 he “surpasses by consuming food”. ‘Food’ refers to the food offered in sacrifice<sup>151</sup>) as well as the victim.<sup>152</sup> The essentials for a sacrifice are present: oil or ghee, fuel (wood), and the offering itself, the *Puruṣa* man (vs. 6). He is then balmed<sup>153</sup> or besprinkled<sup>154</sup> on the sacrificial grass.

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<sup>148</sup> Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 57. See also Jan Gonda, “Vedic Gods and the Sacrifice,” *Numen* 30:1 (July, 1983), 8.

<sup>149</sup> Panikkar, 73.

<sup>150</sup> Gonda, 8.

<sup>151</sup> Griffith, 602, fn 2.

<sup>152</sup> Gonda, 9.

<sup>153</sup> Griffith, 602.

<sup>154</sup> Panikkar, 76.

When all the essentials were in place, the gods, the *sādhyas*,<sup>155</sup> and the *ṛsis* gathered and sacrificed the *Puruṣa* man (vs. 7). There is no indication in the text as to whether he willingly offered himself to be sacrificed or was forced to it, but given the massive expansiveness of the *Puruṣa* man, one might be justified in leaning towards the understanding that the *Puruṣa* man at least consented to the sacrifice for the benefit of the universe.<sup>156</sup> Whether the *Puruṣa* man gave himself willingly or not, the result is a magnificent creation of a manifested world made up of his actual body. The result is his immanent presence throughout creation and an interconnectivity between all animate and inanimate beings and objects. Is it that immanence to which we now turn our attention.

### **Immanence**

The immanence of the original transcendent being results from the distribution of his body after his sacrificial death and dismemberment. As Agera denotes, the aspect accentuated in this hymn, as with the *Nāsadiya Sūkta*, is that creation is a “self-deremption of the one primal substance, call it *puruṣa*, *ekam*, or *sat*, or even God...”<sup>157</sup> In the *Nāsadiya Sūkta* creation comes forth from the One as *tapas* instigates a rising of *kama*. The process of demarcation then commences. In this present *sūkta*, the original substance is dissected and spread throughout the universe. The resulting principle of a common essence comprising creation remains intact, despite the vastly different processes by which that end result is achieved. An interconnectedness and non-differentiated inner substance weaves its way through the universe and holds it together.

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<sup>155</sup> *Sādhyas* are either “a class of semi-divine beings” (Dandekar), “a class of ancient Gods or demi-gods” (Edgerton), “a class of celestial beings, probably ancient divine sacrificers” (Griffith), “an old class of divine beings (Macdonnell), or “those who are not spiritually realized: (Renou) or See Panikkar, 77, fn 7.

<sup>156</sup> This is also Doniger’s viewpoint. See Wendy Doniger, “Ethical and Nonethical Implications of the Separation of Heaven and Earth in Indian Mythology,” in *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics* (eds. Robin W. Lovin and Frank E. Reynolds; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 190.

<sup>157</sup> Agera, 164.

After the sacrifice of the *Puruṣa* man, which the text states was full and complete, leaving no residue<sup>158</sup> (vss. 8, 9), the *Samhitās*, all creatures with teeth, and all cattle and goats were created (vs 8.). Humans were created (vss. 11-12) as well as the Sun, the deities Indra and Agni (vs.13), and the atmosphere (vs. 14). In all these created animate and inanimate objects, the substance with which they are made is the very essence of the *Puruṣa* man. Tennent argues, “The universe is not made by a Surpeme Being, but is rather a sophisticated rearrangement of the divine *Puruṣa* figure so that there is no essential difference between the substance of *Puruṣa* and the substance of the universe.”<sup>159</sup> At the deepest root, the inner substance of all manifestations is interconnected in such a way that there lies underlying unity which ties them together, while allowing the phenomenological distinctions to give separate shape and form. As Gonda states, “In the case of the Vedic *Prajāpati* [*Puruṣa*] creation is a process of emission and exteriorization of some being or object that formed part of, or was hidden in, the creator himself, yet does not become completely independent of him...”<sup>160</sup> This motif is a fundamental principle that is present throughout the Vedas. That foundational motif, the presence of a universal interconnectivity is made possible by the sharing of a common material source of creation, the body of the *Puruṣa* man. This interconnectedness applies even to humans as is espoused in verses 11-12, to which we will now turn.

### **Caste/Social Order**

Vs. 12 of this hymn describes the creation of human categories from specific body parts of the dismembered *Puruṣa*. The brahmin (*Brāhmin*) was created from his mouth;

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<sup>158</sup> Panikkar, 77 fn 8.

<sup>159</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable: Evangelicalism in Conversations with Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 66.

<sup>160</sup> Gonda, 18.



the warrior-prince (*Kṣatriya*) was created from his arms; from his legs the common man of a trade (*Vaiśya*) was created; and from his feet, the lowly serf (*Śūdra*) came into being. Although this text is often quoted to describe the division between categories of people in the Indian society, i.e. the origin of the caste system,<sup>161</sup> the fundamental focus in this hymn is not division, but rather unity. Each category (*varṇa*) is made up from the same body of the *Puruṣa* man as any other. The creation of humans in this verse corresponds to creation of different animate objects or creatures. The entire creation is created from different parts of the *Puruṣa* man's body thereby propounding a consistent interpretation of unified interconnectivity. This should be the fundamental focus of this verse just as it is of the entire hymn. An interpretation of this section in light of the entire hymn, would certainly cause one to re-think the demarcations of the caste system and replace the separation with an acknowledgment of the most basic and fundamental unity that is known to this earth, the commonality of the universal material cause of creation.

Why then, is this verse often interpreted in ways that debunk the unity of the universe? Some scholars argue that the interpretation of caste divisions laid on this text were added to the text as “later accretions.”<sup>162</sup> Walker declares,

This slight allegory was embellished by the brāhmin paṇḍits, commented upon with profound learning, and taken to the national bosom as a divine injunction for such a subordination of one class by another, as can find no parallel in the history of any other nation on earth.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Walker, 1:202.

<sup>162</sup> A Native Indian Missionary, 20. Morgan explains the evolution of the caste system from the two race society (the Aryan and pre-Aryan) into the stratified four castes. See Kenneth Morgan, *The Religion of the Hindus* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1953; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1996), 16.

<sup>163</sup> Walker, 1:202

Furthermore, Radhakrishnan speculates that this system was originally a flexible class system, a social class that became a rigid religious caste. Priesthood was a profession, one which was open to any Aryan and considered equal, not superior, to any other. He argues that the caste system tended to “surpass free thought and retarded the progress of speculation. The moral standard sank. The individual who transgressed the rules of caste was a rebel and an outcaste. The *Śūdras* were excluded from the highest religion. Mutual contempt increased.”<sup>164</sup>

If Radhakrishnan, Walker, and other scholars with this interpretation are correct, then the application of this text seems to be grossly misinterpreted. This hymn is meant to unite, not divide. It is a hymn that declares the unified dignity of all creatures as being created from the same substance, the material essence of the body of the *Puruṣa* man. This reading of the text not only has the potential to serve as a faithful interpretation, but also as a message of dignity and worth to those defeated by society according to a ranking by birth. The *Puruṣa* man was sacrificed and dismembered not for one social level, but for all creation including all humans, no matter their color or familial history.

### **Summary**

The *Puruṣa-Sūkta* aptly expounds on paradigmatic Vedic themes that have been presented in previously examined hymns. One of those themes is ‘sacrifice’. The world had no method of coming into being because there was no substance from which it could be created. The sacrifice of the *Puruṣa* man not only makes possible the creation of the world, but also ensures that the world is contrived from his dismembered body, thereby uniting all of creation with the presence of the same creational material source. This unified source that underlies the variations visible in the manifested reality highlights the

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<sup>164</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 1:132-33.

Hindu contemplation of the one and many and displays the interconnectedness of the universe. This interconnectedness applies even to the array of conditions to which humans are born. The caste system, which is said to have originated with this hymn, actually contradicts the reality and principles of this hymn as it seeks to divide and separate what in actuality is connected and unified. The creation, having been brought forth by the *Puruṣa* man, is unified by his immanence and presence as the material source of creation itself. This theme is further developed in the next hymn of this study, the *Rg - Veda* X.61. Let us now turn to this hymn and its prominent theme, creation through incest.

***Rg-Veda* X.61.5-7<sup>165</sup>**  
**Vedic Incest**

As his phallus was stretched out in eagerness for the act of a man, the manly one pulled back. He drew back again from the maiden, his daughter, that tireless phallus which had been thrust in. As they were in the midst of the very act of union, when the father was satisfying his desire for the young girl, the two of them left a little of the out-flowing seed shed upon the back of the earth in the womb of good deeds. When the father shed his seed in his own daughter, he spilt his seed on the earth as he united with her. The benevolent gods created sacred speech and fashioned Rudra Vāstoṣpati, the protector of sacred rites ... As Agni made the seed for the great father, heaven, he entered into the womb, having noticed that she was inclined to him. The hunter shot an arrow at him boldly. The god satisfied his lust in his own daughter ... As the heat of passion came to the king for his enjoyment, heaven laid aside on the ground the bright seed that had been spilt. Agni caused to be born the blameless benevolent group of youths and made them great ... Heaven is my father, the engenderer the navel here. My mother is the wide earth, my close kin. Between these two outstretched bowls is the womb; in it the father placed his daughter's embryo.

**Introduction and Exegesis**

*Rg-Veda* X.61.5-7 presents a theme that is present throughout the Vedic texts in various forms and with various gods and goddess in relationships to one another; father and daughter, son and mother, son and sister. This theme was also common amongst

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<sup>165</sup> O'Flaherty provides her translation of this text. See Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths* (London: Penguin Books, 1975), 26.

many ancient societies such as Iran, pre-Aryan India, Egypt. This theme to which we refer is the theme of incest. Although it is scattered amongst the Vedic texts<sup>166</sup> this study will focus on RV. 10.61.5-7.

It is interesting that Griffith chooses not to translate this portion of the hymn X.61. He leaves it out in the main body of his text and presents it only in transliterated Sanskrit in the Appendix.<sup>167</sup> In his comment he says that the text is “probably the germ of a later story of *Brahmā* or *Prājāpti* with his daughter...”<sup>168</sup> In lieu of Griffith’s lacking translation, I have provided O’Flaherty’s translation taken from her book, *Hindu Myths*.

The main principle presented in this text is the immanence of the creator in creation and how it addresses the dilemma of the one unifying essence of the universe, versus the many different manifestations of creation. In this text, and others that expound the incest theme, the interconnectivity of the creation is demonstrated through the power of the seed. Here it is the seed of the Father partly being spilt on the ground and used for creation, and partly being planted in the womb of his daughter thereby impregnating her. The importance of the seed is reiterated throughout the Vedic texts.

In this particular text, some of the seed from the father spills onto the ground during the act of union between father and daughter. The Father and daughter are not named in O’Flaherty’s version of the text in her book, *Hindu Myths*, but in her article “Asceticism and Sexuality in the Mythology of Śiva” she identifies various gods that are named as being incestuous. They include *Prajāpati*, *Rudra*, *Agni* and *Śiva*.<sup>169</sup> Though the

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<sup>166</sup> For a list of the basic texts that refer to primeval incest see, O’Flaherty, 313.

<sup>167</sup> Griffith, 574, 653.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 574.

<sup>169</sup> O’Flaherty, “Asceticism II,” 9.

identification of the particular god is not clear, the principle is still evident and foundational in this text and in the others that address this theme of incest. The seed of the god is used as a base for creation, and with that common base, creation is unified and interconnected. Some of the seed is spilt on the ground and is subsequently used for creation. The rest of the seed, of course, is used to impregnate the daughter.

Rudra Vāstoṣpati, whose name means the ‘Lord of the thing or substance’ is one of those beings created from the spilt seed. He is the god who protects sacred rites. Most likely this reference to sacred rites refers to the hymns and rituals that are performed during worship or puja sessions by the Brāhmin priests. The second grouping that is created from the seed is a group of youth, which O’Flaherty notes are mediators between gods and men. These mediators also “distribute among men the gifts of the gods.”<sup>170</sup> In a later text found in the Brāhmaṇas, this *Rg-Vedic* text is communicated with slight variations. It is *Prajāpati* in this later text who desires his daughter and impregnates her. From his seed the animals are formed.<sup>171</sup>

There is also a connection to earlier creation myths that address the creation of heaven and earth specifically. In this current myth, heaven is referred to as the father and earth as the mother. In the middle of the two, lies the womb (*yoni*). The embryo that results from the incestuous union of father and daughter is placed in this womb that lies between heaven and earth.<sup>172</sup> This harkens back to earlier texts that name the earth and sky as the parents of the gods.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> O’Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, 26.

<sup>171</sup> The text is *Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa* 8.2.10. See O’Flaherty, “Asceticism II,” 9.

<sup>172</sup> O’Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, 26.

<sup>173</sup> Brown, 86.

Although there are a great number of details and intricacies that are yet to be deeply explored in this one particular text and those that relate to it in the Vedic corpus, our initial observations supplied here are sufficient to demonstrate a congruency of principles uniting this myth with the previous selections. Although presented in a much different package, the creation being brought into existence by the common essence of a unified creator is unmistakable. Why does the father unite with the daughter instead of the mother? Perhaps it is because the daughter herself is made up from the father's own seed as well. Therefore the embryo that is created is not only from the father's seed, but also the seed of the father is inherently in its mother as well. The missing link at this point pertains to the identity of the daughter's mother, which could enhance, or detract from the purity of the father's essence in this created embryo. Nonetheless, this theme continues on the trajectory that has been established in the previously mentioned texts, and bears influence on those yet to be examined. It is a theme that, although presented in an unethical framework according to societal rules in most contemporary civilizations, coherently addresses the dilemma of how there is one common unifying thread that ties together so many various manifestations. O'Flaherty communicates this well when she writes:

In the most elementary level, we can see that the unacceptable results of an incestuous mating, even on the most abstract cosmogonic level, would underscore the prohibition against incest in the human world. On the other hand, we can see that the myth regards incest again, on the abstract cosmogonic level - as basically necessary...Both original separation and incestuous mating are necessary. Worlds must remain separate, but they also must remain together.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> O'Flaherty, "Cosmogony," 185.

### Summary

In summary, although this hymn presents the material in a very different and less attractive method than the previous hymns examined in the study, the presence of the main principles of Vedic creation continues to be presented. This text supports what has been a common single source of creation that provides a unifying thread throughout all existence despite the many varied manifestations that are seen in the phenomenological world. It is with this foundation that has been laid that we now turn to examine our last text of the *Samhitās*, the *Artharva-Veda* X.7 otherwise known as the *Skambha*.

### *Atharva-Veda:*

#### Introduction

The *Artharva-Veda*, the last of the *Samhitās*, contains 565 hymns. A portion of the hymns are meant for the Brāhmin priests, the *Adhvaryu*,<sup>175</sup> who oversee the sacrifice rituals. These hymns can be used if there is need for correction of a mistake during the ritual ceremony.<sup>176</sup> Many of the hymns contained within the first part are brief charms used for placing magical spells. These spells are meant to protect the people from threats (i.e. snakes and witchcraft) and to produce positive outcomes of efforts (i.e. children birth and attracting one of the opposite sex).<sup>177</sup> The hymns presented in the second portion of the *Samhitā* are longer and therefore provide more complete knowledge about the rituals.<sup>178</sup>

The *Artharva-Veda* has a different atmosphere than the *Rg-Veda*. It presents the gods in a less comfortable fashion and surrounds them with fear. Rather than being hymns of worship, many of the hymns in the *Artharva Veda* are meant to ‘twist the arms’

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<sup>175</sup> Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 21.

<sup>176</sup> Müller, *The Vedas*, 16.

<sup>177</sup> Thomas J. Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition* (Belmont: Wentworth Publishing, 1971), 28.

<sup>178</sup> Hopkins, 28.

of the gods in an effort to persuade them for favor.<sup>179</sup> The *Artharva-Veda* introduces many gods who are also worshiped in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. According to the Radhakrishnan, the greatest of all the gods worship is *Skambha*. Who is “the ultimate principle, called indiscriminately *Prajāpati*, *Puruṣa* and *Brāhman*. He includes all space and time, gods and Vedas and the moral powers.”<sup>180</sup> It is to the hymn that explores the scope and magnificence of *Skambha* that we now turn as we complete the *Samhitā* portion of this study.

***Artharva-Veda X. 7*<sup>181</sup>**  
***Skambha***

- 1 Which of his members is the seat of Fervor:  
Which is the base of Ceremonial Order?  
Where in him standeth Faith? Where Holy Duty? Where, in  
what part of him is truth implanted?
- 2 Out of which member glows the light of Agni?  
From which proceeds the breath of Mātarisvan?  
From which doth Chandra measure out his journey,  
traveling over Skambha's mighty body?
- 3 Which of his members is the earth's upholder?  
Which gives the middle air a base to rest on?  
Where, in which member is the sky established?  
Where hath the space above the sky its dwelling?
- 4 Whitherward yearning blazeth Agni upward?  
Whitherward yearning bloweth Mātarisvan?  
Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha to whom  
with longing go the turning pathways?
- 5 Whiteward go the half-months, and, accordant with the full  
year, the months in their procession?

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<sup>179</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 1:120.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>181</sup> Ralph T. H. Griffith, *Hymns of the Atharvaveda: Translated with Popular Commentary* (New Delhi: M. Manoharlal, 1985), 21-25. Cited 23 March 2011 Online: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/av/av10007.htm>. For alternate translations, See Panikkar, 62-66 and Goodall, 25-37.



- Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
to whom go seasons and the groups of seasons?
- 6 Whitherward yearning speed the two young Damsels, accordant,  
Day and Night, of different color?  
Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
to whom the Waters take their way with longing?
- 7 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
On whom Prajāpati set up and firmly established all the worlds?
- 8 That universe which Prajāpati created, wearing all forms,  
the highest, midmost, lowest,  
How far did Skambha penetrate within it?  
What portion did he leave unpenetrated?
- 9 How far within the past hath Skambha entered?  
How much of him hath reached into the future?  
That one part which he set in thousand places,  
how far did Skambha penetrate within it?
- 10 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
in whom men recognize the Waters, Brahma,  
In whom they know the worlds and their enclosures,  
in whom are non-existence and existence?
- 11 Declare that. Skambha, who is he of many,  
In whom, exerting every power,  
Fervour maintains her loftiest vow;  
In whom are comprehended Law, Waters, Devotion and Belief
- 12 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
On whom as their foundation earth and  
firmament and sky are set;  
In whom as their appointed place rest Fire and Moon  
and Sun and Wind?
- 13 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
He in whose body are contained all three-and-thirty Deities?
- 14 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha.  
In whom the Sages earliest born, the Richas, Sāman, Yajus,  
Earth, and the one highest Sage abide?
- 15 Who out of many, tell me, is the Skambha.

Who comprehendeth, for mankind, both immortality and death,  
He who containeth for mankind the gathered  
waters as his veins?

- 16 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
He whose chief arteries stand there, the sky's four regions,  
he irk whom Sacrifice putteth forth its might?
- 17 They who in Purusha understand Brahma know  
Him who is Supreme.  
He who knows Him who is Supreme,  
and he who knows the Lord of Life,  
These know the loftiest Power Divine,  
and thence know Skambha thoroughly.
- 18 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
Of whom Vaisvānara became the head,  
the Angirases his eye, and Yātus his corporeal parts?
- 19 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
Whose mouth they say is Holy Lore, his tongue the Honey-  
sweetened Whip, his udder is Virāj, they say?
- 20 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
From whom they hewed the lichas off,  
from whom they chipped the Yajus, he  
Whose hairs are Sāma-verses  
and his mouth the Atharvāngirases?
- 21 Men count as 'twere a thing  
supreme nonentity's conspicuous branch;  
And lower man who serve thy branch regard it as an entity.
- 22 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
In whom Ādityas dwell,  
in whom Rudras and Vasus are contained,  
In whom the future and the past  
and all the worlds are firmly set;
- 23 Whose secret treasure evermore  
the three-and thirty Gods protect?  
Who knoweth now the treasure which,  
O Deities ye watch and guard?
- 24 Where the Gods, versed in Sacred Lore,

- worship the loftiest Power Divine  
The priest who knows them face to face  
may be a sage who knows the truth.
- 25 Great, verily, are those Gods who sprang  
from non-existence into life.  
Further, men say that that one part of Skambha is nonentity.
- 26 Where Skambha generating gave  
the Ancient World its shape and form,  
They recognized that single part of Skambha  
as the Ancient World,
- 27 The three-and-thirty Gods within his body  
were disposed as limbs:  
Some, deeply versed in Holy Lore,  
some know those three-and-thirty Gods.
- 28 Men know Hiranyagarbha as supreme and inexpressible:  
In the beginning, in the midst of the world,  
Skambha poured that gold.
- 29 On Skambha Fervour rests,  
the worlds and Holy Law repose on him.  
Skambha, I clearly know that all of thee on Indra is imposed.
- 30 On Indra Fervour rests, on him  
the worlds and Holy Law recline.  
Indra, I clearly know that all of thee on Skambha findeth rest.
- 31 Ere sun and dawn man calls and calls one Deity  
by the other's name.  
When the Unborn first sprang into existence he reached that  
independent sovereign lordship;  
than which aught higher never hath arisen.
- 32 Be reverence paid to him, that highest Brahma, whose base is  
Earth, his belly Air, who made the sky to be his head.
- 33 Homage to highest Brahma, him whose eye is Sūrya and the  
Moon who groweth young and new again, him who made  
Agni for his mouth.
- 34 Homage to highest Brahma, him whose two  
life-breathings were the Wind,  
The Angirases his sight: who made the

regions be his means of sense.

- 35 Skambha set fast these two, the earth and heaven,  
Skambha maintained the ample air between them.  
Skambha established the six spacious regions: this whole world  
Skambha entered and pervaded.
- 36 Homage to highest Brahma, him who,  
sprung from Fervour and from toil,  
Filled all the worlds completely,  
who made Soma for himself alone.
- 37 Why doth the Wind move ceaselessly?  
Why doth the spirit take no rest?  
Why do the Waters, seeking truth, never at any time repose?
- 38 Absorbed in Fervour, is the mighty Being,  
in the world's centre, on the waters' surface.  
To him the Deities, one and all betake them.  
So stand the tree trunk with the branches round it.
- 39 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha.  
To whom the Deities with hands, with feet,  
and voice, and ear, and eye.  
Present unmeasured tribute in the measured hall of sacrifice?
- 40 Darkness is chased away from him:  
he is exempt from all distress.  
In him are all the lights, the three abiding in Prajāpati.
- 41 He verily who knows the Reed of Gold  
that stands amid the flood, is the mysterious Lord of Life.
- 42 Singly the two young Maids of different colours  
approach the six-pegged warp in turns and weave it.  
The one draws out the threads, the other lays them:  
they break them not, they reach no end of labour.
- 43 Of these two, dancing round as 'twere,  
I cannot distinguish whether ranks before the other.  
A Male in weaves this web, a Male divides it:  
a Male hath stretched it to the cope of heaven
- 44 These pegs have buttressed up the sky.  
The Sāmāns have turned them into shuttles for the weaving.

## Introduction

*Artharva-Veda* X.7, otherwise known as the *Skambha* (or *Stambha*<sup>182</sup>) represents a central unifying, transcendent core (*axis mundi*)<sup>183</sup> to the Vedic conception of the universe. *Skambha*, literally meaning ‘support’ or ‘pillar’, draws Vedic concepts and depictions inward. It is the axis upon which the creation concepts pivot. It enhances, supports, and unifies all the principles that have been presented throughout this journey thus far, while advancing to a deeper level of comprehension. As Panikkar states, “All lines of thought converge on one single hypothetical point, just as by following the rays of light we would converge on the invisible center of the sun.”<sup>184</sup> He further states, “*Skambha* is the unthinkable par excellence...the Unborn that is just ready to spring up from the world (v. 31).”<sup>185</sup> Let us now turn to the text itself to discover its insight.

## Exegesis<sup>186</sup>

The first principle this text reveals is an indication of the massive expansiveness of *Skambha*. It is an expansiveness that covers the entire universe and the elements that sustain both inanimate objects and living beings. Vss. 1-3 inquire of the expanse of his limbs and of which ones house such conditions as *tapas* (fervor), *ṛta* (order), faith, and truth (vs. 1), as well as which ones house the phenomenal aspects of this world such as fire, wind, earth and sky (vs. 2). The question posed is not whether these items dwell in the limbs of this being, but *in which limb* do they dwell, thereby asserting that the universe does indeed dwell within the boundaries of *Skambha*. *Skambha* is above it, around it, and encompassing it. The description of the coverage of this support (*skambha*)

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<sup>182</sup> “Artharva Veda (X – 7,8) – Skambha Suktam,” Cited 23 March 2011 Online: <http://hara-hara-mahadev.blogspot.com/2009/08/artharva-veda-x-78-skambha-suktam.html>.

<sup>183</sup> Panikkar, 61.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Due to the length of this hymn, the exegesis will not explain line-by-line significance, but will rather examine sections and themes as they are presented throughout the text.

continues to expand as the hymn progresses. This being draws fire, causes the wind to blow (vs. 4) and the water to flow (vs. 6), while controlling the astronomical aspects of the manifested world (vss. 5 and 6). Various parts of his body make up the universe such as his belly, which is the air (vs. 32). Various natural phenomena such as the wind are initiated in and by him (vs. 34). The text here is reminiscent of the *Hiranyagarbha* whose arms are the four quarters of the sky (RV X.121.4). Is *Skambha* equivalent to the *Hiranyagarbha*, only having a different name, or is *Hiranyagarbha* hidden within *Skambha*? The identity of this *Skambha* teases the reader's curiosity as the hymn progresses.

Second, the text makes a perplexing statement about other gods being in some way dependent on this being. In vs. 7 it states that *Prajāpati* (the Lord of life/creatures) leaned on *Skambha*. This excerpt of the text strongly indicates that the being referred to in RV X.121.10, the *Hiranyagarbha* (who is identified in vs. 10) was not the original being or at least not the strongest being since the Lord of life (*Prajāpati*) leans on *Skambha* not vice versa. This is, of course, given that the verse identifying *Prajāpati* is not a later interpolation into the text, a debate previously discussed. Likewise, this current text seems to indicate that there was something prior to the *Hiranyagarbha*. Vs. 28 reiterates this point saying that it was *Skambha* that “poured forth upon the world that stream of gold [referring here to the Golden Germ (*Hiranyagarbha*)].”<sup>187</sup> This may strongly indicate that the *Hiranyagarbha* was created or originated by *Skambha* indicating a prior and more powerful, more originating existence.

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<sup>187</sup> Panikkar, 65. Goodall's translation reads, “Skambha poured it forth.” See Goodall, 28.

Not only was the *Hiranyagarbha* preceded by and poured out by *Skambha*, and not only did *Prajāpati* lean on *Skambha* but, according to vs. 13, all the other gods, thirty three,<sup>188</sup> are housed in one of his limbs. If the other gods are housed within *Skambha*, then there is a strong implication that *Skambha* is a higher power than those other gods or at the least more original and central. Otherwise, *Skambha* would be housed alongside them or within one of them instead of being the one within each of the others is housed. Vs. 25 may indicate that the gods were born out of nonbeing (note the possible reference to X.129, the *Nāsadīya Sūkta*), and also that Nonbeing is associated with the limb of *Skambha*. Even *Indra*, a god often associated with cosmology in many Vedic texts,<sup>189</sup> is mentioned in vs. 30. Even further still, vs. 27 indicates that these gods are the gods that “distributed portions among themselves,”<sup>190</sup> indicating, according to Panikkar, that this is referring to “the sacrifice of *Puruṣa*,”<sup>191</sup> which is expounded in the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* (RV X.90). Whoever/whatever this being is, it is not only far greater than any of the gods of in the Vedic literature that this study has highlighted thus far, but actually brings them together into some coherence of relationship and thought. They are all in some way found within him or leaning on him. This strategically places this being as a provider and protector as well as in an overall superior position in the hierarchy of the Vedic pantheon.

The transcendence of this being is also accentuated in this text. Vs. 8 indicates that *Skambha* is not only immanent in creation, but also has not *fully* stepped into

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<sup>188</sup> The Vedic tradition adheres to thirty-three as the number of gods in the Vedic pantheon, though popular religion allows for manifestations of unlimited quantity. The text interestingly indicates not thirty-three, but one (BU III.9.1). See S. Radhakrishnan, trans., *The Principle Upanishads* (Great Britain: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953; Repr. New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1978, seventh impr. 1999), 234-35. See also Swami Madhavananda, trans., *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: With the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya* (Calcutta: Avaita Ashrama, 1997, ninth impression), 370.

<sup>189</sup> Giffith provides a helpful index of texts indicating which cosmology texts relate to certain Vedic gods. See Griffith, 678.

<sup>190</sup> Panikkar’s 65.

<sup>191</sup> Panikkar, 67 fn 27.

creation. The text asks, “With how much [of himself] did *Skambha* enter in? What he did not enter, how much was that?”<sup>192</sup> Panikkar interprets this to indicate the transcendent portion out of and over creation.<sup>193</sup> The *ṛsi* is not clear here as to how much of *Skambha* is immanent versus transcendent, but that the indication that *Skambha* is also transcendent is authenticated by this text. This is an aspect of the higher being that has not been emphasized in the texts studied previously. This observation catapults the significance of this text in the context of this study. It would appear necessary for a creator being to maintain some level of separateness from or control over the creation from a stratum that lies above or outside the boundaries of creation itself. The text, by emphasizing the transcendence of *Skambha*, gives credence to the possibility that this being is conceivably the creator or ultimate being.

The question as to the identity of *Skambha* is repeatedly asked in the text. In numerous verses (vss. 4-7; 10-16; 18-20; 23) the text directly inquires, “Tell me of that Support – who may he be?”<sup>194</sup> Goodall translates this line as, “Tell forth that Skambha: which and what is he?”<sup>195</sup> There is an honest inquiry and a deep longing to know *Skambha* portrayed in this context. In vs. 32 the longed for answer is revealed. This *Skambha* is identified as *Brāhman*, whom the text states is supreme,<sup>196</sup> best,<sup>197</sup> or highest.<sup>198</sup> He is sovereign (vs. 31) and all homage is paid to him (vss. 32, 33, 34, 36). In him exists no evil and no darkness, but only light (vss. 40-41). Is it this being, this *Brāhman* the creator of the universe? Certainly there is no explicit reference to the actual

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<sup>192</sup> Goodall, 25.

<sup>193</sup> Panikkar, 66, fn 8.

<sup>194</sup> Panikkar’s translation. See Panikkar, 63-66.

<sup>195</sup> Goodall, 25-29. See also Griffith’s translation in the appendix.

<sup>196</sup> Panikkar, 65.

<sup>197</sup> Goodall, 28.

<sup>198</sup> See Appendix or Griffith, *Artharvarveda*.



creation or origination of the universe or of living beings in this text. Implicitly though, this text does support *Skambha* or *Brāhman* as a creator or originator. The creation reaches towards this being and dwells within its limbs; aspects of nature result from his essence such as the wind resulting from his breathing; and the other gods are said to lean on him or dwell within him. Enough evidence is provided in this text to indicate that, if there is indeed a creator within the Vedic corpus, then that creator is very possibly revealed in this text.<sup>199</sup>

What is the more significant question for this study, however, is not whether this creator has been identified and revealed, but rather what the text indicates about the creation and its relation to the creator. The message in this text is congruent with what previous texts have revealed. There is continued evidence of an underlying essence, an interconnecting thread that provides a unity throughout of all creation that is inclusive of animate beings and inanimate objects. This concept is reiterated throughout the text as the question of the contents of each of his limbs is pondered. The text emphasizes the encompassing stretch of his support for the universe that includes examples such as the Lord of life (vs. 7), all forms of life (vs. 8), the phenomenal world (vss. 11-12), and all of the gods (vss. 13 and 27). His expanse is limitless and he encompasses all that exists. Therefore, Everything in the universe and beyond is unified within him. There is a universal interconnectivity that determines the actions of each part and the ripple effect on the various related pieces of the world. Each part, though unique in the sense of its particular phenomenal identity, is interconnected in the deepest most foundational aspect of its being. This creation theme is the crux of this text and of the entire section.

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<sup>199</sup> One must be cautioned, however, not to assume fast conclusions. Panikkar reminds the reader that comprising the Absolute are four aspects, “*Prajāpati-Paramēṣṭhin-Puruṣa-Brahman*.” See Pannikarr, 57, fn 17.

### **Summary**

This final selection of the *Samhitās* portion of this journey brings together many of the principles that have been made known to us along this investigatory path, and expands our knowledge and understanding. This text has highlighted what appears to be the comprehensive expansion of this being referred to as *Skambha* or support, which is identified in the text as *Brāhman*. This being houses all of creation, provides the phenomenal aspects of creation, and encompasses all the gods of the Vedic pantheon numbered by the scriptures to be thirty-three. Even more importantly, this text affirms the interconnectedness and unified existence of all of creation, as being rooted in this one initial being named here as *Brāhman*.

### **Chapter 1: Conclusion**

The texts examined in the *Samhitās* have been foundational and paradigmatic in their presentation of themes and principles that form the Vedic understanding of creation. These principles are foundational and significant in understanding cosmology, but also in understanding how the texts themselves are related as well as how the entire cosmos is interconnected and unified.

The *Nāsadīya Sūkta* proclaimed the presence of simultaneous paradoxical statements that negate the presence of anything except the One. In the *Nāsadīya Sūkta* the One emerged from the nothingness. Its emergence came forth from its own consciousness and energy as it was self-sustained and alone. The text highlights the darkness and emptiness in the beginning except for the presence of the One. Next, the *Hiranyagarbha* expanded the idea of self-sufficiency and highlighted the power of the Golden Germ to sustain not only itself, but the entire world. In addition to its sustaining

power, a hint of immanence is introduced as the text explains that the *Hiranyagarbha*'s arms are the substance of the four corners of the sky. Following the *Hiranyagarbha* the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* accentuated the immanence of the creation as resulting in the sacrifice of *Puruṣa* by the gods. The text is the paradigmatic text of the Vedic theme of sacrifice, and stresses the underlying significance of all future sacrifices as well as the unification of the universe as resulting from the common material substance of the body of the *Puruṣa*. This commonality even draws together the fragmentation of the castes. The paradigmatic text representing the theme of incest deepens the thematic presence of the one and the many and continues the weaving of the important concept of immanence and interconnectivity.

Significant questions for these texts and for Vedic thought remain unanswered. From an ethical standpoint, one is left to wonder why creation originated in the first place. Was the moment of primordial sacrifice motivated by some inner desire of companionship or love, or was this the normal ebb and flow of the one into the many and the many into the one. Furthermore, do these texts describe actual moments in creation, that is if a moment of creation actually exists, or are they meant only to convey and illustrate principles that govern this present existence?

Similar questions arise when we think about the creator. Who is the One referred to in X.129, or the *Hiranyagarbha* of RV X.121, or the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* RV X.90, or the Father in the incest texts? Is there a primordial creator presented in the Vedic texts? According to the *Skambha* they are all intertwined in an ultimate named *Brāhman*. Is this *Brāhman* of the Vedas the Supreme Being in Hindu thought? The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* states that there is actually one god (BU III.9.1). How does this text fit with the

ones that have been examined in the *Samhitās*? Is there an ultimate to whom all worship eventually flows and by whom the creation is sustained? Additionally, although the texts thus far have spoken of creation, there has been little mention of humankind. How do humans fit into the interconnected universe and do they hold any particular place or meaning? These questions will instigate us to move forward as we now turn in chapter 2 to the end of the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads*.

## Chapter 2: The Upaniṣads

### Introduction

The *Upaniṣads* are known as the ‘end, conclusion, or goal of the Vedas’ (Vedānta).<sup>200</sup> The accepted date range for their composition is 1000 BC to 300 BC.<sup>201</sup> Indian tradition numbers the *Upaniṣads* at one hundred eight, but there are, according to Radhakrishnan, actually over two hundred.<sup>202</sup> They conclude the category of *śruti* texts, which consist of the *Samhitas* (the hymns), the *Brāhmaṇas* (theological manuals composed by and for the *Brāhmins*<sup>203</sup>), the *Āraṇyakas* (esoteric texts concerned with the inmost nature of man<sup>204</sup>), and finally the *Upaniṣads*, whose aim is to provide practical knowledge to freedom.<sup>205</sup>

Literally *Upaniṣads* means “near-sitting”<sup>206</sup> or more specifically is derived from *upa* (near), *ni* (down), and *sad* (to sit).<sup>207</sup> Young boys were entrusted to Vedic teachers in a bond that was as entrusting as marriage. The ceremony includes the action of the teachers placing his hand on the heart of the student and saying, “Your heart shall dwell in my heart, my mind you shall follow with your mind; in my word you shall rejoice with all your heart.”<sup>208</sup> This entrusting of a young boy into the hands of a teacher is the

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<sup>200</sup> Radhakrisnan also notes that originally the term ‘*Vedānta*’ meant ‘the *Upaniṣads*’, though now it is associated with Śāṅkar’s philosophical system. See Radhakrisnan, *Upaniṣads*, 24.

<sup>201</sup> Radhakrisnan, *Philosophy*, 1:142. Walker dates the composition of the present form of the *Upaniṣads* at 400 – 200 BC. See Walker 2: 531.

<sup>202</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Upaniṣads*, 21.

<sup>203</sup> Walker 1:166.

<sup>204</sup> Tennent, *Building Christianity*, 100.

<sup>205</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Upaniṣads*, 24.

<sup>206</sup> Walker 2:530.

<sup>207</sup> Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, eds., *A source Book in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1957), 37.

<sup>208</sup> Brian K. Smith, “Sacrifice and Being: Prajāpati’s Cosmic Emission and its Consequences.” *Numen* 32:1 (July, 1985): 75.

scenario described in the chapter of the *Upaniṣads* that will guide this section of our study as we dive into the meaning of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* chapter, VI.<sup>209</sup>

The breadth of *Chāndogya VI* embodies the beginnings of the foundational elements of creation up to and including the reverse at the time of death. The *Upaniṣad* offers evidence, continued from the knowledge found in the *Samhitas*, of the interconnectivity of the universe manifested by the material and efficient presence of an original being, here referred to as Existence.

In the examination of this text, comments of Śankara and Rāmānuja, the two foremost and original *Upaniṣadic* philosophers will be considered. According to Radhakrishnan, Śankara “believes the aim of the creation accounts is to establish the identity of *Brāhman*<sup>210</sup> and the world.”<sup>211</sup> Koslowski affirms this by stating that in Śankara’s view “The search for the cause of the world leads us to the first cause, the Primal Being.”<sup>212</sup> In his philosophy, Rāmānuja emphasizes the one ultimate reality that contains many,<sup>213</sup> which is a theme that has been discovered in the examination of the *Samhitas*. His analogy of the creation being the body of *Brāhman* conveys, according to Koslowski, three principles. These principles are a) Brahman and the creation are intimately related to one another; b) the creation (inanimate and animate) are dependent on *Brāhman*; and c) the creation and *Brāhman* are inseparable.<sup>214</sup> What is common between these two philosophers is that they both “establish Brahman as the efficient and

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<sup>209</sup> Although time and space will limit our discussion of the *Upaniṣads* to this one chapter, many of the concepts presented in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* are presented and further illustrated in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. References will be given in the footnotes to related verses from this rich and significant text.

<sup>210</sup> Śankara and Rāmānuja both refer to the ultimate being, which in *Chāndogya* is referred to as ‘Existence’, as *Brāhman*. Therefore, when referring their interpretations, the term ‘*Brāhman*’ will be used in order to keep coherency of their thought.

<sup>211</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 2:560.

<sup>212</sup> Koslowski, 29.

<sup>213</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 2:559.

<sup>214</sup> Koslowski, 31.

material cause of the world on scriptural authority...”<sup>215</sup> Is it with that scriptural base that we will now turn to examine *Chāndogya VI* in order to mine from its field of gems.

## **Chāndogya Upaniṣad<sup>216</sup>**

### **Part Six**

#### **Chapter I — The Non—Duality of the Self**

1. Om. There once lived Svetaketu the grandson of Aruna. To him his father said: "Svetaketu, lead the life of a brahmacharin; for there is none belonging to our family, my dear, who, not having studied the Vedas, is a brahmin only by birth."

2—3. Svetaketu went to his teacher's house when he was twelve years old and studied the Vedas till he was twenty—four. Then he returned to his father, serious, considering himself well read and arrogant. His father said to him: "Svetaketu, since you are now so serious, think yourself well read and are so arrogant, have you, my dear, ever asked for that instruction by which one hears what cannot be heard, by which one perceives what cannot be perceived, by which one knows what cannot be known?" Svetaketu asked: "What is that instruction, venerable Sir?"

4—6. "Just as, my dear, by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the truth is that all is clay; "Just as, my dear, by one nugget of gold all that is made of gold is known, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the truth is that all is gold; "And just as, my dear, by one pair of nail—scissors all that is made of iron is known, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the truth is that all is iron—even so, my dear, is that instruction."

7. "Surely those venerable men did not know that. For if they had known it, why should they not have told it to me? Therefore do you, venerable Sir, tell me about it." "So be it, my dear," said the father.

#### **Chapter II — Brahman: the Cause of the Universe**

1. "In the beginning, my dear, this universe was Being (Sat) alone, one only without a second. Some say that in the beginning this was non—being (asat) alone, one only without a second; and from that non—being, being was born."

2. Aruni said: "But how, indeed, could it be thus, my dear? How could Being be born

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>216</sup> Upaniṣadic quotes and references are taken from the *Commentary of Śankarācārya* unless otherwise noted. See Swāmī Gambhīrānanda, trans., *Chāndogya Upaniṣad: with Commentary of Śankarācārya* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, forth repr., 2003), 407. The translation listed here in the text and in the Appendix is by Nikhilananda. See Swami, Nikhilananda, trans. and ed., "Chhāndogya Upaniṣad," in *The Principal Upaniṣads*, (New York: Dover Publications, 2003), 283-359. Cited 25 March 2011. Online: <http://www.swamij.com/upanishad-chandogya.htm>.

from non—being? No, my dear, it was Being alone that existed in the beginning, one only without a second.

3. "It (Being, or Brahman) thought: 'May I be many; may I grow forth.' It created fire. That fire thought: 'May I be many; may I grow forth.' It created water. That is why, whenever a person is hot and perspires, water is produced from fire (heat) alone.

4. "That water thought: 'May I be many; may I grow forth.' It created food (i.e. earth). That is why, whenever it rains anywhere, abundant food is produced. From water alone is edible food produced.

### **Chapter III — The Threefold Development**

1. "Of all these living beings, there are only three origins: those born from an egg, those born from a living being and those born from a sprout.

2. "That Deity thought: 'Let Me now enter into those three deities by means of this living self and let Me then develop names and forms.'

3. "That Deity, having thought: 'Let Me make each of these three tripartite,' entered into these three deities by means of the living self and developed names and forms.

4. "It made each of these tripartite; and how these three deities became, each of them, tripartite, that learn from me now, my dear.

### **Chapter IV — The Threefold Development further explained**

1. "The red colour of gross fire is the colour of the original fire; the white colour of gross fire is the colour of the original water; the black colour of gross fire is the colour of the original earth. Thus vanishes from fire what is commonly called fire, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the three colours (forms) alone are true.

2. "The red colour of the sun is the colour of fire, the white the colour of water, the black the colour of earth. Thus vanishes from the sun what is commonly called the sun, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the three colours alone are true.

3. "The red colour of the moon is the colour of fire, the white the colour of water, the black the colour of earth. Thus vanishes from the moon what is commonly called the moon, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the three colours alone are true.

4. "The red colour of lightning is the colour of fire, the white the colour of water, the black the colour of earth. Thus vanishes from lightning what is commonly called lightning, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the three colours alone are true.

5. "It was just through this knowledge that the great householders and great Vedic



scholars of olden times declared: 'No one can now mention to us anything which we have not heard, thought of, or known.' They knew all from these three forms.

6—7. "Whatever, appeared red they knew to be the colour of fire; whatever appeared white they knew to be the colour of water; whatever appeared black they knew to be the colour of earth. "Whatever appeared to be unknown they knew to be the combination of these three deities (i.e. colours). Now learn from me, my dear, how these three deities, when they reach man, become each of them tripartite.

### **Chapter V — The Threefold Nature of Food**

1. "Food when eaten becomes threefold. What is coarsest in it becomes faeces, what is medium becomes flesh and what is subtlest becomes mind.
2. "Water when drunk becomes threefold. What is coarsest in it becomes urine, what is medium becomes blood and what is subtlest becomes prana.
3. "Fire when eaten becomes threefold. What is coarsest in it becomes bone, what is medium becomes marrow and what is subtlest becomes speech.
4. "The mind, my dear, consists of food, the prana of water and speech of heat." "Please, venerable Sir, instruct me further." "So be it, my dear."

### **Chapter VI — The Physical Nature of the Mind, the Prana and Speech**

1. "That, my dear, which is the subtlest part of curds rises, when they are churned and becomes butter.
2. "In the same manner, my dear, that which is the subtlest part of the food that is eaten rises and becomes mind.
3. "The subtlest part of the water that is drunk rises and becomes prana.
4. "The subtlest part of the fire that is eaten rises and becomes speech.
5. "Thus, my dear, the mind consists of food, the prana consists of water and speech consists of fire." "Please, venerable Sir, instruct me further." "So be it, my dear."

### **Chapter VII — How the Mind consists of Food**

1. "A person, my dear, consists of sixteen parts. Do not eat any food for fifteen days, but drink as much water as you like. Since the prana consists of water, it will not be cut off if you drink water."
2. Svetaketu did not eat any food for fifteen days. Then he came to his father and said: "What, Sir, shall I recite?" His father said: "The Rik, Yagus and Saman verses." He replied: "They do not occur to me, Sir."

3. His father said to him: "Just as, my dear, of a great blazing fire a single coal, the size of a firefly, may be left, which would not burn much more than that, even so, my dear, of your sixteen parts only one part is left; and therefore with that one part you do not remember the Vedas. Now go and eat and you will understand me."

4. Svetaketu ate and approached his father. Then whatever his father asked him, he showed that he knew it.

5—6. Then his father said to him: "Just as, my dear, of a great lighted fire a single coal the size of a firefly, if left, may be made to blaze up again by adding grass to it and will thus burn much more, "Even so, my dear; of your sixteen parts only one part was left and that, when strengthened by food, blazed up. With it you now remember the Vedas. Therefore, my dear, the mind consists of food, the prana consists of water and speech consists of fire." After that he understood what his father said, yea, he understood it.

### **Chapter VIII — Concerning Sleep, Hunger, Thirst and Death**

1. Uddalaka the son of Aruna said to his son Svetaketu: "Learn from me, my dear, the true nature of sleep. When a person has entered into deep sleep, as it is called, then, my dear, he becomes united with Pure Being (Sat), he has gone to his own Self. That is why they say he is in deep sleep (svapiti); it is because he has gone (apita) to his own (svam).

2. "Just as a bird tied by a string to the hand of the bird—catcher first flies in every direction and then finding no rest anywhere, settles down at the place where it is bound, so also the mind (i.e. the individual soul reflected in the mind), my dear, after flying in every direction and finding no rest anywhere, settles down in the Prana (i.e. Pure Being); for the mind (the individual soul) is fastened to the Prana (Pure Being).

3. "Learn from me, my dear, what hunger and thirst are. When a man is hungry, as they say, it is water that has led (i.e. carried away) what was eaten. Therefore, just as they speak of a leader of cows, a leader of horses, a leader of men, so do they speak of water as the leader of food. So, my dear, know this offshoot (i.e. the body) to have sprung forth from a cause, for it cannot be without a root.

4. "And where could its root be except in food (earth)? And in the same way, my dear, as food too is an offshoot, seek for water as its root. And as water too, my dear, is an offshoot, seek for fire as its root. And as fire too, my dear, is an offshoot, seek for Being (Sat) as its root. Yes, all these creatures, my dear, have their root in Being, they dwell in Being, they finally rest in Being.

5. "When a man is said to be thirsty, it is fire that has led (i.e. carried away) what was drunk by him. Therefore as they speak of a leader of cows, a leader of horses, a leader of men, so do they speak of fire as the leader of water. So, my dear, know this offshoot (the body) to have sprung forth from a cause, for it cannot be without a root.

6. "And where could its root be except in water? And in the same way, my dear, as water is an offshoot, seek for fire as its root. And as fire too, my dear, is an offshoot, seek for

Being as its root. Yes, my dear, all these creatures have their root in Being, they dwell in Being, they finally rest in Being. "And how these three deities (fire, water and earth), on reaching a human being, become each of them tripartite has already been said. When a person departs hence, his speech merges in his mind, his mind in his prana, his prana in heat (fire) and the heat in the Highest Being.

7. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter IX — The Absence of Individuality in Deep Sleep**

1—2. "As bees, my dear, make honey by collecting the juices of trees located at different places and reduce them to one form, "And as these juices have no discrimination so as to be able to say: 'I am the juice of this tree,' or 'I am the juice of that tree'—even so, indeed, my dear, all these creatures, though they reach Pure Being, do not know that they have reached Pure Being.

3. "Whatever these creatures are, here in this world—a tiger, a lion, a wolf, a boar, a worm, a fly, a gnat, or a mosquito—that they become again.

4. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter X — The Absence of Particularized Consciousness in Deep Sleep**

1—2. "These rivers, my dear, flow—the eastern toward the east and the western toward the west. They arise from the sea and flow into the sea. Just as these rivers, while they are in the sea, do not know: 'I am this river' or 'I am that river,' "Even so, my dear, all these creatures, even though they have come from Pure Being, do not know that they have come from Pure Being. Whatever these creatures are, here in this world—a tiger, a lion, a wolf a boar, a worm, a fly, a gnat, or a mosquito, that they become again.

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XI — The Indestructibility of the Jiva**

1. "If, my dear, someone were to strike at the root of this large tree here, it would bleed but live. If he were to strike at the middle, it would bleed but live. If he were to strike at the top, it would bleed but live. Pervaded by the living self, that tree stands firm, drinking in again and again its nourishment and rejoicing.

2. "But if the life (i.e. living self) leaves one of its branches, that branch withers; if it leaves a second, that branch withers; if it leaves a third, that branch withers. If it leaves the whole tree, the whole three withers.

3. "In exactly the same manner, my dear," said he, "know this: This body dies, bereft of the living self; but the living self dies not. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XII — The Birth of the Gross from the Subtle**

1. "Bring me a fruit of that nyagrodha (banyan) tree." "Here it is' venerable Sir." "Break it." "It is broken, venerable Sir." "What do you see there?" "These seeds, exceedingly small, "Break one of these, my son." "It is broken, venerable Sir." "What do you see there?" "Nothing at all, venerable Sir."

2. The father said: "That subtle essence, my dear, which you do not perceive there—from that very essence this great nyagrodha arises. Believe me, my dear.

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XIII — The Invisibility of an Existent Object**

1. "Place this salt in water and then come to me in the morning." The son did as he was told. The father said to him: "My son, bring me the salt which you placed in the water last night." Looking for it, the son did not find it, for it was completely dissolved.

2. The father said: "My son, take a sip of water from the surface. How is it?" "It is salt." "Take a sip from the middle. How is it?" "It is salt." "Take a sip from the bottom. How is it?" "It is salt." "Throw it away and come to me." The son did as he was told, saying: "The salt was there all the time." Then the father said: "Here also, my dear, in this body you do not perceive Sat (Being); but It is indeed there."

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XIV — The Means of Self—Knowledge**

1. "Just as someone, my dear, might lead a person, with his eyes covered, away from the country of the Gandharas and leave him in a place where there were no human beings; and just as that person would turn toward the east, or the north, or the south, or the west, shouting: 'I have been brought here with my eyes covered, I have been left here with my eyes covered!'

2. "And as thereupon someone might loosen the covering and say to him: 'Gandhara is in that direction; go that way'; and as thereupon, having been informed and being capable of judgement, he would, by asking his way from one village to another, arrive at last at Gandhara—in exactly the same manner does a man who has found a teacher to instruct

him obtain the true knowledge. For him there is delay only so long as he is not liberated from the body; then he reaches perfection.

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XV — Ultimate Liberation**

1. "Around a dying person afflicted with illness, my dear, his relatives gather and ask: 'Do you know me? Do you know me?' He knows them as long as his speech is not merged in his mind, his mind in his prana (breath), his prana in heat (fire) and the heat in the Highest Deity.

2. "But when his speech is merged in his mind, his mind in his prana, his prana in heat and the heat in the Highest Deity, then he does not know them.

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XVI — Liberation for the Knower of Brahman**

1. "My dear, they (i.e. the police) bring a man whom they have seized by the hand and say: 'He has taken something, he has committed a theft.' When he denies it, they say: 'Heat the axe for him.' If he has committed the theft but denies it, then he makes himself a liar. Being false—minded, he covers himself with falsehood, grasps the heated axe and is burnt. Then he is killed.

2. "But if he did not commit the theft, then he makes himself what he really is. Being true—minded, he covers himself with truth, grasps the heated axe and is not burnt. He is released.

3. "As that truthful man is not burnt so also one who has known Sat is not born again. Thus in That (Sat) all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu."

### **Exegesis**

#### **Section 1: Material Cause**

The sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* communicates its message in the form of a conversation between a *Brāhman* and his son, *Śvetaketu*. *Śvetaketu* was sent from his father's house at age of twelve to live as a celibate and study under a teacher. At age 24, he arrived back into his father's house, "conceited and proud" (VI.1.2). Upon the *Śvetaketu*'s return, his father pointedly shows him his arrogance, and lack of

understanding of most important knowledge. This knowledge pertains to that ‘through which the unheard becomes heard, the unthought becomes thought, the unknown becomes known’ (VI.1.3). This of course, refers to knowledge of Existence, and the unity of the Self, including *Śvetaketu*, in all beings. Rāmānuja interprets this verse as such: “Have you inquired into that principle which is the commanding spirit as well as the material cause of the world...”<sup>217</sup> He later states, “Have you learnt about *Brāhman*, which is the primeval cause of the processes like creation, maintenance and destruction of the entire universe...”<sup>218</sup> The text itself does not name *Brāhman*, but rather refers to this being as Existence. The essence of the message is consistent however. The father wants to know if his son has learned about the most important aspects of the universe, the being or presence that connects it all together by means of its own material cause.

In this first section of the chapter, the father shows *Śvetaketu* that learning about Existence (the material cause of the world), is likened to knowing the material cause of objects in the phenomenal world. The examples that are given are pots made from clay (VI.1.4), items made from gold (VI.1.5), and nail cutters made from iron (VI.1.6). Just as a pot made from clay is in essence, clay itself, and nail cutters are in essence the iron from which they were made, so too is the phenomenal world, (including humankind) the same essence as its material cause, Existence. The explanation of this focus point is progressively elaborated throughout the chapter beginning with a description the state of Existence before creation.

### **Section 2.1: In the beginning, Existence**

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<sup>217</sup> S. S. Raghavachar, trans., *Vedārtha Saṅgraha of Śrī Rāmānujācārya* (Kolkata: Trio Press, 2002), 9.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 10.

Verse VI.2.1a states, ‘in the beginning this was Existence alone, One only, without a second.’ The phrase, ‘in the beginning’ refers here to the time period before the creation of the world. Śāṅkara states in his commentary that the words ‘One only’ mean that there is “nothing else coming under the category of Its product.” He interprets ‘without a second’ to mean there is no other “efficient cause,”<sup>219</sup> and therefore there is “no second thing which is different from Itself [Existence].”<sup>220</sup>

Verse VI.2.1b presents an objection that in the beginning there was non-existence. This is refuted in the next verse (VI.2.2), and also in Śāṅkara’s commentary. In his refutation, Śāṅkara argues against the claim of the *Vaiśeṣikas*<sup>221</sup>, the *Buddhists*<sup>222</sup>, and the *Naiyāyikas*,<sup>223</sup> who, although have slightly different viewpoints, agree that non-existence was present before creation and to some extent even the source for that creation. Śāṅkara declares this belief illogical and states that non-existence has no proof.<sup>224</sup> He further supports the presence of Existence rather than non-existence with the grammatical connection that all the words/phrases, ‘one only,’ ‘without a second,’ and ‘Existence,’ all use the same case ending, which is neuter.<sup>225</sup> Śāṅkara is, as is the *Upaniṣadic* text, firmly committed to the presence of Existence with no other “efficient cause”<sup>226</sup> credited to the creation of the world. The phrase ‘in the beginning’ refers to the creation of the world not the creation of Existence. It is not stated in this chapter whether Existence Itself has any beginning or end.

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<sup>219</sup> *Commentary of Śāṅkarācārya*, 414.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. See also *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I.2.1.

<sup>221</sup> The *Vaiśeṣikas* claim there was no existence before the creation of a product. *Commentary of Śāṅkarācārya*, 414.

<sup>222</sup> The *Buddhists* claim that before existence was an absence of Existence. Ibid., 415.

<sup>223</sup> The *Naiyāyikas* claim that both “existence and non-existence alone were present before creation” and the creation is a new identity, not maintaining material unity once created. Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 416.

<sup>225</sup> Śāṅkara does not indicate the case ending of ‘non-existence.’ Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 414.

### Section 2.3-4: Creation of the three initial elements

Section 2 continues by describing the acts of creation. Verse VI.2.3 states that Existence saw/thought<sup>227</sup> that it shall become many. Therefore, It created fire. This translation strongly implies that this Existence has consciousness and intelligence. Only a thinking being can think. If this being was simply a material substance that evolved by some natural act of evolution, then the text would not state that this being *thought or saw*. It may indicate that the text evolved or developed into fire, but nothing in the text indicates this was the process. There is some inherent consciousness that instigated this initial step of creation.

Taking into consideration Radhakrishnan's translation, which states, "It sent forth Fire,"<sup>228</sup> the visual of the initial act becomes even more complete. 'It [Existence] sent forth fire' creates a visual of fire coming forth out from Existence Itself, indicating that Existence is its material cause. According to this text, fire was not created from a secondary material source. There is a transformation, which 'has speech as its basis' (VI.1.4-6),<sup>229</sup> that takes place as fire comes forth from Existence. The transformation does not negate the object's non-difference from Existence. At the same time, according to Śāṅkara, the object's non-difference from Existence does not negate its difference from Existence or its reality.<sup>230</sup> All objects are ultimately real, because all objects are ultimately Existence, a claim that refutes the philosophy of the *Nyāya* school.<sup>231</sup> Śāṅkara, and the *Upaniṣad* itself agree that an object is different in name and form, but is simultaneously non-different from Existence due to Existence being its material cause

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<sup>227</sup> The term 'thought' is taken from the Radhakrishnan translation. See Radhakrishnan, *Upaniṣads*, 447. Nikhilananda's translation also chooses the gloss, 'thought'. See Nikhilananda, *Online*, or the Appendix.

<sup>228</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Upaniṣads*, 449.

<sup>229</sup> *Commentary of Śāṅkarācārya*, 409-11.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 423.

<sup>231</sup> The philosophy of the *Nyāya* school assumes that a "thing is different from existence. *Ibid.*, 423.



(*upādānkāraṇaṇ*).<sup>232</sup> Regarding the order of creation, there is an apparent discrepancy between this and other *Upaniṣadic* texts, according to Śāṅkara's commentary.<sup>233</sup> In other texts, it is stated that air (ether) is created first.<sup>234</sup> Śāṅkara explains this apparent tension by noting that the main point of the text is not to address the order of creation but rather to emphasize that all creation finds its material cause in Existence.<sup>235</sup> Additionally, the chapter is focusing on the mixture of the three gods: fire, water, and food in all of creation<sup>236</sup> and does not have any purpose for including ether. Even if the order of creation is accepted as air then fire, there is still no contradiction in the *Upaniṣad*. Air came forth from Existence and fire (heat) then came forth from air. Therefore, fire ultimately came forth from Existence,<sup>237</sup> further supporting the material cause of Existence for all of creation.

Verse VI.2.3 continues by stating that fire thought and created water, and then water thought and created food (VI.2.4), each becoming many by creating the next. An example of this relationship is given by Śāṅkara of water coming forth from a person who grows hot, i.e. sweats.<sup>238</sup> The most strategic question that arises from this text is this: "How did fire and water visualize?" This question relates to the topic of consciousness within fire and water. Did fire and water actually consciously create? A prerequisite to answering this question is whether Existence Itself possesses

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<sup>232</sup> Carr argues against Śāṅkara's theory of material causation especially in the realm of *Nirguna Brahman*. He develops his argument in Brian Carr, "Śāṅkara and that Principle of material Causation," RS 35:4 (Dec., 1999), 425-39. Despite Carr's objections, I affirm that this text strongly implies a material causation of creation from Existence.

<sup>233</sup> For example *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II.7.1. Ibid., 424.

<sup>234</sup> See *Brahma Sūtra* II.iii.10, for a discussion of the case endings and further support for the creation of air prior to fire. *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya of Śāṅkarācārya* (trans. Swāmī Gambhīrānanda; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, sixth impression, 1996), 462-63.

<sup>235</sup> *Commentary of Śāṅkarācārya*, 424.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 422.

consciousness, since the *Upaniṣad* first addresses the creative acts of Existence in VI.2.3. *Śankara* argues that Existence does possess consciousness, which differs the claims of the *Śāṃkhyas* who believe that Existence was actually insentient *pradhāna* (i.e. lacking consciousness).<sup>239</sup> If the *Śāṃkhya*'s claim was accurate, then Existence would not have had the capability to intentionally create, especially a creation that contains intricate orderliness and interconnectivity. The question remains as to whether fire and water have the same conscious abilities as Existence. One possible answer is no, that fire and water do not possess a consciousness of their own. *Śankara* claims that fire and water, etc. "seem to visualize (*alkṣata*),"<sup>240</sup> and that their seeing is only inferred and is therefore, secondary. In *Śankara*'s commentary on the *Brahma Sutra* I.i.6, in which he references this verse, he argues that the 'seeing' by fire and water is secondary due to their insentient nature. He states, "there is nothing like the word Self in their case to make their "seeing" a possibility in the primary sense."<sup>241</sup> Furthermore, he argues that only Existence is attributed with seeing in the *Upaniṣad*.<sup>242</sup> If *Śankara*'s conclusions are correct, then one would have to agree that fire and water did not themselves consciously create.

In contrast to *Śankara*'s conclusions, however, it must be noted the text explicitly states that fire and water 'saw'. It is possible that since Existence is the material cause of fire and water, then perhaps these objects not only possess the material of Existence, but also the consciousness as well. Given that elements of creation are each presided by a deity,<sup>243</sup> is it possible that this text is expounding not only the consciousness of Existence,

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid. *Śankara* also refutes this claim in his commentary of the *Brahma Sutra* I.i.6; *Brahma Sutra Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya of Śāṅkarācārya*, 53-54.

<sup>240</sup> *Commentary of Śāṅkarācārya*, 426.

<sup>241</sup> *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya of Śāṅkarācārya*, 53.

<sup>242</sup> *Commentary of Śāṅkarācārya*, 426.

<sup>243</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Upaniṣads*, 449.

but also of the gods themselves. Are these deities also conscious thinking beings? The answer to that question is beyond what can be determined by this initial text, but whether these deities exhibit personal consciousness or simply ‘see’ out of their insentient nature, it is certain from the text that they are held together by the initial creation. This initial creation, which labels Existence as the material and efficient cause, magnifies the interconnectedness of these created elements. Given their importance as the foundational blocks of the created phenomenal world, this interconnectivity extends throughout the universe as creation ensues.

As a note of clarification, it is helpful to understand the meaning of the word ‘food’ (*annam*) in 2.4 before moving on in the text. The question arises as to whether *annam* refers to the earth or edible food? The verse itself states that when it rains, ‘edible food’ becomes plentiful (VI.2.4), which might lead one to believe that this is referring to edible food such as grains. Both Śāṅkara<sup>244</sup> and Rāmānuja<sup>245</sup> however, agree that the reference here is to the earth, since edible food comes out from the earth. Accepting their conclusion, the three elements will be referred to as fire, water, and earth. This is significant because these three elements make up the triad of building blocks of the phenomenal world of which the text has focused thus far. The next sections move beyond this limited focus and expand into the creation of animate objects, which will also be expressed in a triad.

### **Section 3.1: Three Origins**

Section three begins by discussing the three origins of living beings: eggs, wombs, and sprouts (VI.3.1). Śāṅkara explains that this verse refers to “those creatures

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<sup>244</sup> *Commentary of Śāṅkarācārya*, 425; *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya of Śāṅkarācārya* (II.iii.12), 464-65.

<sup>245</sup> *Brahma Sutras: With text; English Rendering, Comments According to Śrī-Bhāṣya of Śrī Rāmānuja, and Index* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, third impression, 1995), 277-78.

possessed of souls,”<sup>246</sup> which would include animals, plants, and humans. The location of this verse in the chapter is intriguing and puzzling. It is interjected between section two, which explains the initial creative acts, and the remainder of section three, which discusses Existence entering into fire, water, and earth as the individual soul. Its placement may indicate that there is something significant about the three created gods and the three origins. Perhaps there is an unidentified dual connection between fire and eggs, water and wombs, and earth and seeds respectively. Or perhaps, and this is most likely, there is an emphasis on the tri-fold nature of creation, three gods which are made three-fold (in future verses), and three origins. This verse shows another layer of interconnectivity in the universe as the unit of three is uniformly found within creation.

### **Sections 3.2: Existence as the Individual Soul**

In verse VI.3.2 it is stated that Existence enters into each of the three gods, fire, water and earth ‘in the form of the soul of each individual being’ and that Existence ‘manifested name and form.’ This verse significantly introduces a new aspect of the interaction of Existence with creation. In the text, leading up to this verse, the Upaniṣad has articulated that Existence is the material cause of the world, which stresses a continuity of original essence throughout creation, but at this juncture, the text indicates a deeper level of immanence and control of Existence in creation. This verse indicates that Existence (literally *devatā*, meaning divinity or being (*sat*))<sup>247</sup> is not only the material cause of fire, water, and earth, but is also the internal soul or being within each one. This point significantly affects our theological understanding of the inner workings of the universe. Although the elements possess a difference in appearance and function from

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<sup>246</sup> *Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, 428.

<sup>247</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Upaniṣads*, 450. Notice the continuity to RV X.129.

Existence and from each other, each one is, at the root level, consisted of the uniform original material and also sustained by the same inner sustenance, or soul.

*Śankara's* understanding is this: Existence entered “in a form non-different from Its own nature as consciousness”<sup>248</sup> and yet, as a “reflection of consciousness.”<sup>249</sup> Furthermore in his Commentary on *Brahma Sutra* II.i.14, Śankara states that name and form, which were manifested by the entering of Existence, are neither real nor unreal. They are “non-different from omniscient God,” and yet the omniscient God is different from them.<sup>250</sup>

The illustration that is used to explain this tension is that of the reflection of the sun on water. The reflection of the sun on water is a reflection of a real object. The Sun (at least in the framework of the phenomenal world) does actually exist. If the sun moves, the reflection on the water will disappear. The reflection itself has no separate sustainable existence. If the sun should happen to shift, or be hindered by clouds or other objects placed in the line of light, then the reflection loses its presence. It is merely a reflection of something that is real, which connotes some level of difference between the sun and its reflection. Yet, the reflection is not unreal. There really is a reflection that can be seen on the water. Not only that, it reflects an object that is really real (at least from the standpoint of the phenomenal world). Therefore, the reflection itself is not false or unreal. This illustration illuminates and clarifies the reality of both Existence and its reflection as the individual soul, while demonstrating that the transformation of name and

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<sup>248</sup> *Commentary of Śankarācārya*, 430.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya of Śankarācārya*, 334; *Rāmānuja*, in his commentary on the same sutra, states that the individual souls are Brahman's body, *Brahma Sutras: Śrī Rāmānuja*, 221-22.

form are not real in themselves (VI.1.4,5),<sup>251</sup> yet are simultaneously not unreal. The reflection is dependent on Existence, but not permanent in its current state.

*Rāmānuja*, who refers to this being as *Brāhman*, offers a slightly different explanation: “He has entered into all creatures as their soul, being their ruler; therefore he is the self of all creatures and all creatures constitute his body.”<sup>252</sup> He emphasizes that the universe is one with Brahman because Brahman is the soul of his body, the universe.<sup>253</sup> Brahman is the unifying authority and on him all is dependent.

This complex relationship of interconnectivity wrapped in phenomenal distinctions is crucial in understanding the relationship that Existence has with the creation. Existence is the material cause of the creation and also the individual soul that sustains each individual organism. The individual soul is non-different yet different from Existence, which itself remains unaffected by and distinct from the creation it embodies. This crucial theme will be further explored as the text progresses.

### **Section 3.3-4.7: Three-fold existence**

Existence continued to manifest Its creative acts by entering one-by-one into these three gods (fire, water, earth) and then making each one three-fold (VI.3.4). This is accomplished by a mixing of the subtle parts of each of the three elements in each of the gods, respectively. Each god is associated with a color; fire with red, water with white, and earth with black (VI.4.1). As a result of being made three-fold, the specific identity of each one was replaced with a more comprehensive identity.<sup>254</sup> Fire therefore, is no longer known as a single identity with the name Fire. It has changed and now includes

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<sup>251</sup> *Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, 432.

<sup>252</sup> Raghavachar, 16.

<sup>253</sup> Mariasusai Dhavamony, “Rāmānuja’s Conception of Man as related to God,” in *Man, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Religious Anthropology* (ed. by Claas Jouco Bleeker; vol 19 of *Studia Missionalia*, 1970), 140.

<sup>254</sup> *Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, 435.

water and earth. It now contains all three colors. These three colors are shown to exist in the sun (VI.4.2), the moon (VI.4.3), and in lighting (VI.4.4). This is intended to attest to the presence of the three colors throughout all objects in the phenomenal world, which further supports the *Upaniṣadic* phrase, ‘All transformation has speech as its basis, and it is a name only’ (VI.1.4.5). When one has attained true knowledge, the apparent differences cease and one is aware that everything is made up of these three colors, which originate from Existence.

The question remains, however, as to why there is still an observable difference between the three gods (fire, water, and earth) in the phenomenal world? It may be that there is a ratio of how these three are mixed so that fire still appears as fire, water as water etc..., or it is perhaps a lack of right knowledge that prevents one from seeing all three in everything. Somehow, in the inner workings, all three are manifested in a particular way that gives the phenomenal appearance that is seen in the world. Despite the reason for the lack of awareness, the main premise of the text, which builds on what has preceded it, is not thwarted. Existence thought creation and caused its existence in the form of fire, water, and earth making Existence the material cause of creation. Then, Existence entered into that creation as its inner soul, thereby manifesting itself as the inner sustenance of each created element. Finally in this present verse, Existence took the three elements and mixed them in such a way that each one now contains the others. Any difference that may have existed is now eliminated by a common integration. There is a unified connectivity that runs throughout creation that overrides any phenomenological difference. This foundational concept, although communicated in

varies ways throughout the Vedic corpus, continues to be developed and asserted in the texts examined in this study.

### **Sections 5 – 7: The three gods and the human**

The logical development of unity within difference continues in section 5 and 6, as the text describes how each of these three colors is manifested in the human. Food, water, and fire each divide into three parts, the grossest, the medium and the subtle. Water forms the urine, blood, and vital force of the human (VI.5.2). *Śankara* observes that that vital force will leave if one ceases to drink.<sup>255</sup> Fire divides into three parts to form the bone, marrow, and speech of a person (VI.5.3), which according to *Śankara* is evident by the clarity and power that comes into one's speech after eating butter or oil.<sup>256</sup> The greatest emphasis in the text is given to the division of earth and its eventual make up of the mind. Food (earth) divides to form the feces, flesh, and mind of the person (VI.5.1 and VI.6.1-5). In his commentary, *Śankara* explains that the subtlest part of food rises and becomes the mind stuff, i.e. it nourishes the mind.<sup>257</sup> The mind is made of food, just as the vital force is made of water and the speech of fire. *Śankara* argues that the mind itself is not eternal, which counters the view of the *Vaiśeṣikas*.<sup>258</sup> The seventh section presents the reader with a life lesson to demonstrate that the mind is made up of food. *Śvetaketu* is told to go away and not eat for 15 days, but to continue drinking since water is the source of the vital force. When *Śvetaketu* returns, and before eating, he is unable to explain the Vedas. Once he eats, however, he is able to give logical and

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<sup>255</sup> *Commentary of Śankarācārya*, 443.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 444.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 442.

<sup>258</sup> The *Vaiśeṣika* scriptures consider the mind to be “eternal and partless.” *Ibid.*, 442.



informative explanations. Therefore, through the consumption of food, “mental power is created.”<sup>259</sup>

This text uses the very practical and simple example of the functions of the human body to demonstrate the foundational themes of this chapter of the *Upaniṣad*, themes that impact the Hindu’s understanding of creation and its continuity. These texts lead up to the presentation of a momentous section in the chapter of which we have arrived.

### **Section 8: The Individual Soul is Existence**

Section eight is the most significant section of the Chapter as the entire thought flow peaks on the final verse of this section (VI.8.7). This section begins its ascent to this crucial verse by explaining the union of a person with Existence during deep sleep, which *Śankara* interprets as dreamless sleep.<sup>260</sup> During deep sleep, it is said the person “attains his own Self”<sup>261</sup> or “has gone to his own.”<sup>262</sup> *Śankara* engages in a lengthy discussion of this verse. He explains his interpretation with the illustration of a person looking into a mirror. When the person is awake, it is as if a person is looking into a mirror and so the reflection is visible. When the person enters deep sleep and the individual soul returns to Existence, which is likened to the removal of the mirror and therefore the removal of the reflection from the face of the mirror. While merged with Existence, the individual soul finds refreshment, rest, and contentment. The individual soul returns to its embodiment however, since it is ‘bound to the person,’ just as a bird, which bound by a string, returns to its post (VI.8.2).

Section eight continues to demonstrate the interconnectivity found within the human body. Here the text explains the relation of the body to fire, water and earth, by

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 449.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 455.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 454.

<sup>262</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Upaniṣads*, 456.

referencing examples of hunger and thirst (VI.8.3-5). The text states that the root of the body, being food, is digested in the stomach by water. Thirst is said to be instigated by fire, which heats up the body and causes the body to sweat. This then dries the body of its fluid, which causes thirst. Thus, in the human body, fire leads water and water leads food, all being interconnected.

The climactic verse of the entire chapter, and one that is repeated eight more times, is verse VI.8.7. This verse succinctly encapsulates the very strategic *Upaniṣadic* thesis that all creation has as its own essence ‘That [Existence] as the Self.’ This section follows a steady and logical progression of thought. It began by showing how the three created elements (divinities) are brought forth out of Existence, which is their material cause. This was followed by the discussion of Existence making the each one three-fold and entering into them as each individual soul. The chapter then explicated how each of these three gods interacts in the human body. This logical progression, which has taken portions of 43 verses to complete, leads to and supports this climactic theme that is declared in the well known *Upaniṣadic* phrase ‘*tat tvam asi* (Thou art That, O Śvetaketu)’. The verse reads: “That which is the subtle essence (the root of all) this whole world has for its self. That is the true. That is the self. That art thou, Śvetaketu...”<sup>263</sup>

The understanding of the unification of the universe by the presence of Existence as the material cause and also the inner soul of creation, is now stated by this verse to apply to humankind and all of existence. Radhakrishnan offers an explanation of this verse. He states the following:

The famous text emphasizes the divine nature of the human soul, the need to discriminate between the essential

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<sup>263</sup> Radhakrishnan’s translation. See Radhakrishnan, *Upaniṣads*, 458.

self and the accidents with which it is confused and the  
fetter by which it is bound.<sup>264</sup>

*Śankara* explains in his commentary saying, “The whole universe has become possessed of a Self through this Self which is called Existence.”<sup>265</sup> He views the ‘Thou’ and ‘that’ as virtually synonymous.<sup>266</sup> *Rāmānuja* annotates that ‘thou’ and ‘that’ are placed in apposition to signify only *Brāhman* (in the text referred to as Existence).<sup>267</sup> He favors a more literal reading of the text.<sup>268</sup> Despite the different readings, both *Śankara* and *Rāmānuja* agree that this text pertains specifically to Existence, or as they prefer, *Brāhman*. They also agree that the significance is far more broad than the person of *Śvetaketu* or even humankind. Not only is one person’s identity found in Existence, but that same identity is found in all people, animals, and objects, even though name and form are manifested and cause an apparent phenomenal difference. This significance will become more evident as the text progresses and further analogies are provided in the next eight verses. Each analogy ends with the phrase, “Thou art That’ in a repetitive and insistent reminder of this foundational Vedic theme.

### **Sections 9-10: Lack of awareness of merging into Existence**

Sections nine and ten are dedicated to explaining why creatures do not know that they return to Existence every day (in deep sleep). The explanation is made through illustrations which can be found in the text. For our purposes in this present study, it is worth noting that for the being that has not yet realized that its nature is that of Existence, it merges in deep sleep with its distinctions. Those distinctions allow the creature to

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> *Commentary of Śankarācārya*, 468.

<sup>266</sup> Eric J. Lott, *God and the Universe in the Vedāntic Theology of Rāmānuja: A study in his use of the Self-Body Analogy* (Madras: Ramanuja Research Society, 1976). 21.

<sup>267</sup> Raghavachar, 17.

<sup>268</sup> Lott, 21.

return to its phenomenological state. As Śankara states, “they merge into Existence without knowing their own nature as Existence.”<sup>269</sup>

### **Sections 11-13: The Subtleness of Existence**

Sections eleven through thirteen continue to demonstrate the presence of Existence as the individual soul throughout the phenomenal world. Section 11 focuses on the illustration of a tree and explains that when the individual soul discards a branch of the tree, that branch dries up and dies. Meanwhile if the soul leaves the tree entirely, then the entire tree dies. It is an analogy of a paradox: just as it is a single soul that sustains a complex tree, so too is it a single soul (that of Existence) that sustains the entire universe containing both sentient and insentient beings.

Section twelve, according to Śankara, explains how this world of names and forms can be born from Existence, which possesses neither. This, of course, further supports that there is nothing incongruent between Existence and this phenomenal world. The analogy used in this verse is that of a seed from a *nyagrodham* (banyan) tree. In the very inside of the seed, there is nothing that is seen. These verses claim that the huge tree grows from this “subtleness that cannot be perceived,” and instructs Śvetaketu to have faith that this is true. The intent of this text is to explain that beyond the seed (and any phenomenal existence) there is the subtleness of Existence Itself. This subtleness is unperceivable in the phenomenal world, but that does not deny its presence nor its material and efficient cause of creation. A further attempt to explain this concept is evident in section thirteen, which utilizes the illustration of salt in water. Once salt is combined with water, it cannot be removed, but it is obvious, upon tasting the water, that

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<sup>269</sup> *Commentary of Śankarācārya*, 471.

the salt is present. Likewise, Existence is present in the world, although often unperceived.

#### **Section 14: Knowledge of Existence**

Section fourteen answers the very important question of how this proper knowledge of Existence is achieved. The father uses the illustration of a man being blindfolded and led to a foreign land. Upon reaching the foreign land, he is left there, blindfolded, and shouting for help. If a knowledgeable person comes and removes the bandage from his eyes, then that person with knowledge is able to instruct the lost man to go one way or the other. By continuing to ask those who possess knowledge, the lost man eventually returns to his home. The significance of this illustration is that the person has been distanced from Existence. He does not know where he is and yet he wants to go home. It is with the help of ones who have knowledge that the blindfold can be removed so the lost one can see his way home to Existence.

#### **Sections 15-16: The process of death**

Section fifteen continues to support the thesis that Existence is the root of all beings. This section delineates how a person exits from this life and what events ensue at the time of his death. According to the text, the order of reversal is this: speech merges into the mind, mind merges into the vital force, vital force merges into heat (fire), and fire merges into Existence. This is the order of creation reversed and it symbolizes that from whence something arises, to that it ultimately returns. This process is the same for all individual souls, whether or not right knowledge of Existence is attained during the present embodiment. That changes however, once the individual soul has merged into Existence itself. At that juncture, the soul who has right knowledge of Existence has found its rest and continues in the merged state. The soul who does not have right

knowledge of Existence is re-embodied to continue its journey. Section 16 explains that when the soul merges into Existence, if it lacks true knowledge, it will be sent forth into another embodiment. For the one who has achieved true knowledge will not return to the phenomenal world. As *Chāndogya* VI befittingly ends with a final repeat of the climactic phrase, ‘...Thou art That, O’ *Śvetaketu*’ (VI.16.3), the Vedic focus of a unified creation is recapitulated. Existence, which was in the beginning alone is the unifying material cause of creation and the inner soul of all existence.

### **Summary**

For our purposes of understanding the creation of the universe and the relationship between the creator (or ultimate) and the creation, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is doubtless a paradigmatic text. It frames its the discussion in the context of a young *Brāhmin* learning from his teachers and his father about the most important aspects of knowledge, that by which the unheard becomes heard. *Śvetaketu* learns about Existence, the supreme and first being, who is the material cause of the world as well as its soul. He learns of the underlying unity of the universe that glues all aspects of creation, animate and inanimate, together and in summation he learns ‘Thou art That’ (*tat tvam asi*), that he himself is unified with all of creation. The *Upaniṣad* continues in its presentation of knowledge by explaining the process of death and how the assimilation of this true knowledge of the unified identity of the world impacts the moment of decision between re-assimilation into the phenomenal world, or the merging within Existence itself. Throughout the text the Vedic themes of creation, specifically the presence of a unifying and consistent undercurrent of the interconnectedness of creation not only to Existence but to the other manifested forms of creation, are firmly presented and supported with a myriad of illustrations and analogies.

This text and the other Vedic portions that have been examined are not exhaustive, however, of the entire Vedic presentation of the topic of creation, nor does the presentation itself answer all the questions of the reader. Those questions will be presented and deliberated in the conclusion of Part I, to which we will now turn.

## Part I: Conclusion

This brief examination of the Vedic concept of creation has revealed consistent themes found throughout the corpus. Paradigmatic texts in the *Samhitās* established foundational themes that remained consistent throughout. The presence of a Being, alone with only itself in the beginning, is present in the *Nāsadīya Sūkta*, the *Hiranyagarbha*, and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. It does seem clear by these texts, that there is some ultimate being that was not only present in the beginning alone, but also had consciousness and internal energy by which it begin the process of the manifestation of the phenomenal world. It was out of the darkness that *sat* (being) began to emerge and with that emergence, manifestation was birthed and began to grow and multiply.

Second, it appears very clear from the text that this being is both the material substance and the efficient cause and sustenance of the manifested creation. The paradigmatic sacrifice of *Puruṣa* gives credence that the actual substance of this god is the material substance of the creation. Furthermore, the *Skambha* describes in great detail, the comprehensive indwelling of creation within this being's limbs. In this hymn there was no mention of anything, either inanimate or animate (including the gods), that was outside the scope of this being, who in the text is declared to be *Brāhman*.

Third, given the unified material ingredient of all manifested forms, there lies an interconnectivity amongst creation. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* demonstrates through various analogies and illustrations, the tri-fold integrated substance of creation, all of which come forth from Existence. The repetition of the well known saying, 'Thou Art That', reiterates this foundational unity that interlinks all of creation not only in material substance but in the inner soul as well. The entire creation is interconnected. Members of



various castes, animate beings, and inanimate objects, despite their various physical manifestations in the phenomenal world all possess an underlying concordant essence. The true release, according to this text, is the merging back into Existence upon death, a merging made possible by right knowledge of *tat tvam asi*.

Questions remain, however, regarding Vedic concept of creation. The identity of a distinguished personal deity or efficient cause is not known. Neither is the name of this deity. The various names found throughout the corpus include *Indra*, *Agni*, *Puruṣa*, *Skambha*, *Brahman*, *Existence*, or *Tvaṣṭa*. Could one of these names refer to the ultimate source from which the universe emerges? Or could it be some other being that has not yet been discussed. Furthermore, is there a creator at all in the Hindu texts? Two atheistic Hindu philosophical systems (*Sāṃkhya* and *Mīmāṃsā*) say no. They argue that the world, and every object in it is eternal and has no beginning.<sup>270</sup> Perhaps this creation that is spoken of is actually the beginning of each recycling of the universe, known as the *kalpa*. Each *kalpa* results after one thousand *yugas* of manifested creation (each lasting through four stages and totaling 4,320,000 years) followed by another thousand *yugas* in an unmanifested state.<sup>271</sup> Is it actually the recycling of the *kalpa* of which these creation texts actually refer? Was there ever a solid beginning or an initial creation of anything, manifest or unmanifest? Considering the texts that have been examined, there is no clear direction towards an answer to this question, though the general evidence seems to lean heavily towards the understanding that there was no initial creation of the universe according to Vedic thought. It is most likely the 'in the

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<sup>270</sup> Koslowski, 9,16.

<sup>271</sup> Tennent, *Round Table*, 76.

beginning' refers to every new beginning.<sup>272</sup> Deussen states this about the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, a text that was alluded to in this study but not directly exegeted, "...the aim is not to relate a consistent history of the creation myth, rather ... to teach the absolute dependence of all existing beings on the ātman [the soul of the universe]."<sup>273</sup> The texts examined in this study have left open the door for Deussen's hypothesis to be true. There is an inconsistency in the details of the myths: different names are used, different methods are employed, and different groupings of manifest creation are discussed. The thematic congruence however, trumps any apparent contradictions. Creation is one and yet not identical, as this oneness leaves room for manifested difference. In the core of essence there lies a unity that has the potential to govern all of life, all relationships, and the eternal destiny of all manifestations of this distributed material substance, which is empowered by a common unified soul.

Creation in Vedic thought is a complex and intriguing journey and this study has only broken through the outer layer of its message, but one thing is for certain, all is one, and one is all. Or otherwise stated, there is one in the many, and the many comes forth from the one. This should impact every follower's view of all that surrounds him or her in the manifested world. These texts support creation care and even nurture and care for one's fellow human of a lower caste. If the universe is truly interconnected and created from the same material substance and efficiently created from the same consciousness, then that interconnectivity has potential to affect every aspect of life and society.

Furthermore, if the text of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* holds validity, then the seeking of right knowledge is foundational and essential for those seeking to merge into Existence at

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<sup>272</sup> Panikkar, 80.

<sup>273</sup> Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (trans. by Rev. A.S. Geden Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1919; repr., Delhi: Private Limited, 1999), 188.

the end of the present manifestation. This topic is developed throughout the Vedas and is discussed and debated amongst various Hindu philosophies, but taking these texts as they are, without further input, the knowledge that *Śvetaketu* needed would be a sought goal of every Vedic follower.

The message given in the creation texts of the Vedic corpus is an important one that has potential to greatly impact the lives of the adherents of society and of society as a whole. It is also a message that has the potential to spill over into non-adherents as well. Is this interpretation accurate and is there a true unity amidst the diversity of the phenomenal world? If yes, should not human actions and relationships be governed by this principle? It certainly causes one to reflect and investigate the possibilities.

## Part II: The Bible

The Bible consists of 66 books written over the span of 1500 years.<sup>274</sup> Its current form was established by 367 A.D. According to itself, each word is inspired<sup>275</sup> and is used by God, the creator, to reveal himself to his creation.<sup>276</sup> The authors of the Biblical texts are varied in profession, ethnicity, and social status and represent a wide range of the created mankind.

Similar to the Vedas, the theme of creation is disseminated in various texts throughout the bible. From these texts can be found the underlying fundamental framework that guides all relationships within that creation. The relationship of God, who is repeatedly affirmed as the creator, to all created animate beings and inanimate objects is rooted in the Biblical creation texts. Guidelines that govern the interactions between humans and between humans and the created universe are also firmly rooted in these creation texts.

In order to gain a proper understanding of creation in the Bible, and yet reduce the choice of texts to a reasonable and manageable size, this portion of the study will focus on several sections from the Older Testament. They include several chapters from Genesis, in which the foundation of God as creator is laid. In these chapters, the creation of humans as the climax of creation is emphasized and highlighted. These chapters also include the narration of how that creation became broken and hostile. The study in the Older Testament will then proceed to the examination of two Psalms, Psalms 8 and 104,

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<sup>274</sup> Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981, 1993, 2003), 22.

<sup>275</sup> Exod 20:1, Matt 10:20, 24:35, 2 Pet 1:18-21.

<sup>276</sup> Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant & Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (SOTBT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 17.

which will affirm God as creator and testify to the goodness of creation even in its fallen state. Finally, a text in the New Testament, Colossians 1:15-20, will be examined.

Colossians will expand the biblical concept of the creator God to include the second person of the trinity, Jesus Christ. It will also affirm his lordship of over all creation as well as present the reader with God's solution that brings reconciliation and new life to the fallen and broken world.

Throughout the progression through these texts, one unified portrait of creation and its creator will be formed. It is with that expectation that we now turn to Genesis.

## Chapter 3: Old Testament

### Genesis 1

#### Introduction

The book of Genesis, which narrates the creation of the world and the fall of mankind, is one of the first five books of the Bible known as the Pentateuch, or the ‘Law of Moses’. To the Jews this section is known as the ‘Torah’.<sup>277</sup> The authorship of the Pentateuch has been a source of debate for at least the last 100 years amongst scholars<sup>278</sup> as challenges by and to the Documentary Hypothesis have arisen. According to Garrett, the Documentary Hypothesis began with Jean Astruc.<sup>279</sup> The Documentary Hypothesis attempts to prove that the Pentateuch is based on four separate sources known as J, E, D, and P, none of which are still extant. On the opposite side of the debate are scholars who support Mosaic authorship with evidence found in the New Testament. Additionally they find support in Philo and Josephus who both refer to the Pentateuch as “the five books of Moses.”<sup>280</sup> A detailed description of the debate is not necessary for this present study, though it is an important aspect of the authorship of the book and is worth mentioning.

Regarding the possible date of authorship, there are two possibilities. Those who adhere to the understanding that Moses compiled Genesis from other sources would date the writing of the book between 1440 and 1400 B.C., and those who support that the entire Pentateuch was written as a single unit would date the writing around 550B.C.

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<sup>277</sup> T.A. Bryant, compiler, “Pentateuch” in *Today’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1982), 483-84.

<sup>278</sup> Duane Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: the Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 7-8.

<sup>279</sup> Garrett, 14.

<sup>280</sup> Kenneth A. Mathews, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (ed. E. Ray Clendenen; 2 vols.; Nashville: Broadman & Holman: 1996), 1A: 22.

This study of the creation texts will commence with the first chapter of Genesis, which takes the reader back to the beginning before any creation has ensued. While the entire chapter will be examined and gleaned from, vss. 26-30 will be given special attention as this passage focuses on the creation of mankind and the special place humans are given in the created order. Some of the important themes found in this text include the presence of a monotheistic God who, alone in the beginning, consciously creates by the power of his word; the unity of creation as originating from the same efficient cause, and the place of responsibility given to humans who have been created in God's image.

### **Exegesis**

#### **Genesis 1:1-2: In the Beginning**

The first two verses of Genesis are packed with significant motifs that demand our attention. The verses read, 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.'<sup>281</sup> These verses are not only strategic in their presence and placement in the Christian and Jewish scriptures, being the very first sentences of the assembled canon, but they are also strategic due to their connotation of consequential creational themes.

Among the most important foci of these opening verses is that of the creator, who is called *Elohim* (God), which is a general semantic term for deity. The text implicitly indicates that God was/is one. The Hebrew verb translated as 'created' in vs. 1, בָּרָא, is in the singular, thereby indicating a singular subject. Though *Elohim*, the subject of the sentence, is literally plural, its plurality is not indicative of multiple beings as it would have been in the polytheistic systems of the peoples surrounding the Israelites. There are

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<sup>281</sup> Scripture excerpts from Genesis will be quoted in the English Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

many theories regarding the plurality of the term, which could convey a form of respect or could simply be a carry over from the neighboring languages. This term could also be representative of the triune monotheistic Christian God. Vs. 2 states that the ‘Spirit of God was hovering...’ The Spirit’s participation in creation, as well as the Son’s, which will be discussed in the next chapter, is noted in several other verses throughout the Bible, including Psalm 104:3 and Job 33:4. No matter the reason for the plural subject, there is uniformity in the interpretation that this word does not refer to more than one God. The God portrayed in this text is monotheistic.<sup>282</sup> Therefore, in the beginning, there was one being, namely God, who created the heavens and the earth. Furthermore, this text, and others in the corpus, support the understanding that this God is eternal.<sup>283</sup> Though the creation texts speak of the created phenomenal world, there is no mention of the beginning of God. It is appropriate and accurate to state that this God mentioned in Genesis was not only alone in the beginning, but that he himself has no beginning.

Vs. 2 intimates a consciousness in this God who planned and purposed creation into being. In the text, the mention of God’s Spirit ‘hovering’ creates a curiosity and an anticipation of what he purposes to do. God’s acts of creation are not random spontaneous acts. They are planned and brought about at the purposed time. He has sovereign authority as maker of heaven and earth, a position affirmed throughout the Old Testament in texts such as Ps 115:15, 121:1, 124:8, 134:3, 146:6.

The self-sustenance of God is supported by vs. 2 in which the text presents a pre-creation darkness that covered the expanse. This darkness recollects an emptiness or a

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<sup>282</sup> Foster offers an informative discussion regarding the use of this word in Gen 1:1. See R.V. Foster, “The Word *Elohim* in Genesis I,” *The Old Testament Student* 6:8 (Apr., 1887), 241-243. See also Joel S. Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

<sup>283</sup> Later texts in the canon affirm that God is eternally existent (Isa 57:15, Rev 1:8).



lack of light, which will only be penetrated by God's creation as described in vs. 3 and beyond. The text clarifies that the period mentioned here is prior to any manifestation of the phenomenal world, and therefore before any source of physical light such as the sun, moon, and stars. In this verse we also find a mentioning of the waters covering the expanse. These waters signify a lack of life and sustenance and in ancient texts were often symbolized to denote chaos. In later texts water denotes destruction (as with the flood) and also judgment (as in baptism).<sup>284</sup>

Finally, the first clause of the entire sentence, 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth', compels our attention. It can either be read as summary verse, giving the over all focus of the entire chapter, or it can be read to refer to the beginning of the universe before there was any manifestation of creation.<sup>285</sup> Though the interpretation of this opening sentence is debated by scholars, the understanding that this verse refers to the actual beginning of the world is supported not only by the historical orthodox view, but also by the context in which it appears.

### **Genesis 1:3-25: The creation of the universe**

Moving forward in the text the reader is presented with the extraordinary creative power of God. This creative power is unleashed simply by God's speaking. He vocalizes a command, and the creation comes into being. This is presented in the text by a series of verses that state, "And God said..." The context of his speaking is significant for several reasons. First, unlike the Vedic conception of creation, the biblical account

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<sup>284</sup> Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study I* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 18. Kidner interprets this phrase as referring to the actual ocean. See Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An introduction & Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967), 45.

<sup>285</sup> Kline interprets this verse to mean the beginning of the creative acts, before the world began. Gowan, Kidner, and Rice all agree with Kline that this verse represents the actual beginning of the universe, and that the universe does have a beginning. See Meredith G. Kline "Genesis," Pages 79-114 in *The New Bible Commentary* (ed. by D. Guthrie and J.A. Moyer. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 82; Donald E. Gowan, *Genesis 1-11: From Eden to Babel* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988, 17; Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An introduction & Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967), 43.

does not indicate that any substance was used in the initial creative process, not that of God's own body nor or any other substance. The text simply states that God spoke creation into being. Though not all scholars agree, this statement has traditionally been interpreted as creation via *ex-nihilo* (Latin, meaning "out of nothing"),<sup>286</sup> meaning that no prior substance existed from which the heavens and the earth were created. While the text does not explicitly pronounce creation *ex-nihilo*, this reading is supported by the lack of evidence in the text that a prior substance existed, and also by the repetitive phrase, "And God said." God simply spoke, and by speaking God created the phenomenal world including light (vs. 3), heaven (vs. 6), the ocean and dry land (vss. 9-10), vegetation to fill the earth (vss. 11-12), and the lights in the sky (vss. 13-18). By his verbal command, God created all the necessary aspects that supply the proper accommodation for life and sustenance. These acts of creation by speaking display a power and an authority that is unmatched by anything present in the created elements. This God is unique amongst his creation and is over and above it all as the authority and author of its very existence. Gunton declares this belief when he writes, "It [creation out of nothing] affirms that God in creating the world relied on nothing outside himself, so that creation is an act of divine sovereignty and freedom, an act of personal willing that there be something other."<sup>287</sup> Not only is God powerful and sovereign and above his creation, but he is also a god of will, consciousness, and purpose. Creation was not a random act, it was declared into being by its creator.

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<sup>286</sup> Creation via *ex-nihilo* is affirmed in the NT in Heb 11:3 (By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible" (NAS)) and Rev 4:11. For further considerations as to the logical credibility of creation *ex-nihilo* see Thomas V. Morris, "Creation 'ex nihilo': Some Considerations," IJPR 14:4 (1983): 233-39. Gunton provides a thorough overview of the history of this doctrine. See Gunton, 8-9, 65-96.

<sup>287</sup> Gunton, 9.

From God's position of authority and sovereignty over the creation, he declares it good (vss. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). In light of what is often seen in creation today, with the evil acts of mankind and the destruction of earthquakes, and tsunamis, this text reminds the reader of the inherent goodness that resulted from creation's first sculpting straight out of the mind of God by the power of his voice. This goodness applies also to the creation of animate beings, including the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the livestock of the dry land, as described in vss. 20-24.

Before examining the specifics of this act of creation, it is worth a moment to examine what is meant by the word 'day.' Scholars disagree on whether the word 'day' refers to a 24 hour period as we experience in our present concept of time, or whether it means an extended period of time. It is also debated whether the days mentioned in this text are even to be considered in some sort of chronological order. According to Gunton, Augustine argued that creation was instantaneous and declared that since "creation is an act of the timeless God, then all God's acts must be conceived to be timeless."<sup>288</sup> After significant study of this term and its use in Genesis, it is my view that it is most helpful to interpret the text by analyzing the categories and the message conveyed, rather than trying to press into the text a literal time dependent reading. The most convincing of the arrangements is shown in the JPS Torah commentary.<sup>289</sup>

Six days of creation <sup>290</sup>			
Day	Creative Act	Day	Creative Act
1	Light	4	The luminaries
2	Sky, leaving terrestrial waters	5	Fish and fowl
3	Dry land	6	Land Creatures
	Vegetations		Humankind
	(Lowest form of organic life)		(Highest form of organic life)

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>289</sup> Saran, 3.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

The JPS Torah Commentary states that this topical layout was very common in the Ancient Near East.<sup>291</sup> Not only would this format have been familiar to the societies of the Ancient world, but it clearly shows an organizational method to the creation, or at the least, to the way the creation story is narrated. The “territory” is listed in the first column labeled “Creative Act<sup>292</sup>”, and the “inhabitants” of that territory are listed in the second column. One of the most important features of this topical arrangement is the placement of the creation of humankind, in the last and most climatic position. Following the creation of mankind, God rested on the seventh day. (Gen 1:31) Gen 2:4<sup>293</sup> begins a new unit which gives pertinent details of the creation narrative of chapter 1.<sup>294</sup>

Given the texts examined thus far, it is sufficiently supported that God is the creator, that he was alone in the beginning, and that he created the world *ex-nihilo*. With that foundation, we move to the next section of the text which focuses on the creation of mankind. While gleaning insight regarding the human creation and mankind’s resultant relationship with God and the created world around him, we will delve deeper into the text to draw out more specifics regarding the process of creation and the nature of the Godhead.

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Mathews labels the columns slightly differently with the headings “Unproductive Becomes Productive” and “Uninhabited Becomes Inhabited,” which serves to give further understanding to the significance of the topical format of this chart and the placement of human kind. Mathews, 115.

<sup>293</sup> Though there is debate as to whether the creation narrative of Gen 1 continues through 2:4a (due to the view of multiple authors), I hold the view that 2:4 is beginning a second narrative of the same creation rather than a summary of chapter 1. See Mathews, 114.

<sup>294</sup> Scholars have grouped the creation narrative in many different ways. These groupings include the days of preparation and the days of accomplishment, as well as the days of form accompanied with days of fulfillment. For a broader discussion see Niehaus, 143.

### **Genesis 1:26-30: Creation of Mankind**

Gen 1:26-30 narrates the creation of mankind. The creation narrative leads up to this climactic moment,<sup>295</sup> thereby giving it precedence.<sup>296</sup> At the beginning of this account the Hebrew uses a surprising plural subject for the verb meaning ‘to do or make’ (נַעֲשֶׂה) in the first sentence “...let us make man...” In all the previous verses in Genesis throughout the entire creation account, there is no mention of a plural subject in reference to God. The actual meaning of the plural in this text is not completely clear to scholars as is evident by their diverse opinions.<sup>297</sup> The JPS commentary favors the interpretation of a heavenly court, stating that this is the “Israelite version of the polytheistic assemblies of the pantheon – monotheized and depaganized.”<sup>298</sup> Both Johnson<sup>299</sup> and Hamilton<sup>300</sup> choose a trinitarian meaning of the plural while Cassuto indicates that the plural is used because God is exhorting himself.<sup>301</sup> The argument for or against each option is well stated by Mathews, who favors the reading that the plural in this passage refers to an “intra-divine conversation, a plurality in the Godhead, between God and his Spirit.”<sup>302</sup> Clines agrees with this view naming it “duality within the Godhead,”<sup>303</sup> giving credit to Barth for originally discovering this insight.<sup>304</sup> Mathews, Clines, and Barth collectively

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<sup>295</sup> Gordon Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15* (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 27.

<sup>296</sup> Nahum M. Saran. *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis: the traditional Hebrew text with the new JPS translation* (Philadelphia, New York, Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 11.

<sup>297</sup> Mathews lists six possibilities as being: 1) a remnant of polytheistic myth 2) God’s address to creation 3) plural indicating divine majesty 4) self-deliberation 5) divine address to heavenly court and 6) divine dialogue with the Godhead. See Mathews, 161-62.

<sup>298</sup> JPS, 12. Clines gives several examples of Near Eastern Creation Myths in which humans are created as a result of conversation amongst the gods. D.J.A. Clines, “The Image of God in Man” TB 19 (1968): 63.

<sup>299</sup> Johnson, 177-78.

<sup>300</sup> Hamilton, 134.

<sup>301</sup> U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1972), 55.

<sup>302</sup> Mathews, 163.

<sup>303</sup> Clines, 68.

<sup>304</sup> Clines, 69.

make a very solid case for a divine conversation<sup>305</sup> which in turn leaves in tact the interpretation from Gen 1:1-2 that God was present alone in the beginning.

The text continues in vs. 26 with the collective noun, *adam* (אָדָם), which is properly interpreted to mean mankind, i.e. inclusive of males and females.<sup>306</sup> ‘Let us make mankind in our image, according to our likeness.’ This phrase, ‘in our image, according to our likeness’ (בְּצִלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ) has instigated rich and deep conversations. Its interpretation influences important theological implications. Clines proposes that the phrase be translated with the preposition ‘as’ in stead of ‘in’.<sup>307</sup> According to Clines, the difference in interpreting the preposition in this manner would indicate that “man does not have the image of God, not that he is made in the image of God, but *is himself* the image of God.”<sup>308</sup> Clines explains that in the Ancient Near East, an image was the “dwelling place of a spirit”<sup>309</sup> and that the spirit “takes up its abode in the image.”<sup>310</sup> Later in his discussion, Clines states that man is not only the spiritual image of God, but also the human body is the image of God.<sup>311</sup> Clines also notes the connection of man’s ruling (over the fish of the sea etc...) and man’s being the image of God draws partly from the concept of the king who, in Ancient Near Eastern cultures, is considered the image of God.<sup>312</sup> As insightful as Cline’s argument is, not all scholars agree with him,<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Given the Christian doctrine of the triune Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), I favor a triune rather than double conversation. The presence of the trinity in creation will become evident as the stuffy progresses.

<sup>306</sup> The verses in Gen that have the plural meaning are: Gen 1:26, 27; 2:5; 3:24; 5:1,2; 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; 7:21, 23; 8:21; 11:5.

<sup>307</sup> Clines, 75.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. This concept can also be seen in modern day Hinduism, where an idol is considered to have the power of the God. As a result, devotees reach out to touch the idol in order to receive some sort of blessing from the god which indwells it.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 95. Clines summary on page 101 is succinct and helpful. See Clines, 101.

making the debate rich and deep. To fully assess the evidence is beyond the scope of this study, but what is consequential to note is that, out of all creation, only mankind has this distinction of being made in/as the image of God. In this way, God has set apart humans in a special category and although they retain individual existence from God, they are in some way, made to reflect him on earth.

One of the ways humans reflect God is through the dominion they have been given in vs. 28 over all living beings of creation (in the water, in the air, or on the ground). In studying the use of the Hebrew word in the biblical text, it is clear that this ‘ruling’ does not indicate a harsh rule, but rather an authority, which comes with responsibility.<sup>314</sup> Mankind is also told to subdue the earth which Hamilton indicates means “subduing the land” as in agriculture.<sup>315</sup> Throughout the creation narrative, when each grouping is mentioned as being created, the scripture indicates each time that ‘it was good’. While it has been stated already that the creation of man is the climactic event in the creation narrative, and that only man bears the image of God, one must note that does not demean the goodness of the rest of creation. Rather, humans have a responsibility to care for all of creation while extending dominion over it.<sup>316</sup> Humans and the rest of creation are unified as both resulting from God’s creative power, yet they are distinct, according to the text, in regards to responsibility and authority. It is worth noting as well

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<sup>313</sup> Hamilton refutes Cline’s argument and states candidly that Gen 1:26 does not define how or what the phrase actually means, rather, it simply makes the statement that “to be human is to bear the image of God.” Victor P Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990), 137. Westermann indicates that the meaning of the image wording is to indicate that man was made to communicate with God. He states directly that this “in no sense means a ‘likeness to God’s image.’” Claus Westermann, *The Genesis Accounts of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 21.

<sup>314</sup> This word is used almost exclusively in referring to humans ruling over other humans. Examples include: Lev 25:36, 43, 26; 1 Kgs 4:24, 5:16, 9:23; 2 Chr 8:10; Ps 68:27, 72:8; Isa 14:2; Jer 5:31; Ezek 29:15. Only twice does that ruling have explicit harshness associated with it (Ez 34:4 and Joel 3:13). Only in Gen 1 does this Hebrew word refer to human interaction with creation (Gen 1:26, 28).

<sup>315</sup> Hamilton, 140.

<sup>316</sup> Mathews comments similar to this and refers to man as “caretakers.” Mathews, 175.

that this authority extends to both males and females alike as both are made in/as God's image, have dominion over creation, are blessed and are commanded to be fruitful and multiply while also subduing the earth. Mathews notes that the designation of male and female is due in part, to give understanding to the blessing of procreation<sup>317</sup> in the beautiful blending of male and female sexuality.<sup>318</sup>

Vs. 29 is a very interesting designation to mankind as God gives food to mankind and also limits what is permissible to eat. God does not say in this text that living beings, having within them life, are to be killed and used for food. It is true that in Gen 9 God adds animals to the list of acceptable foods, but at this early stage of creation that is not what is intended for mankind.<sup>319</sup> Wenham highlights the contrast between this creation narrative and that of Mesopotamia. In Mesopotamian creation myths "man was created to supply the gods with food,"<sup>320</sup> which is in direct contrast of the Hebrew God not only creating man but also giving him everything he needs for existence. In vs. 30 God likewise provides food for the animals, which again does not include living beings, humans, or other animals, but limits the food for the animals to plants. Von Rad notes the closeness of animals and humans in the creation narrative. They are both created on the same day and are both given herbage for their sustenance.<sup>321</sup> Verse 30 ends with a definitive, 'And it was so.' Westermann comments that this "is the only direct, the only unveiled statement in the whole framework."<sup>322</sup> Though I believe that comment is

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<sup>317</sup> Mathews, 173.

<sup>318</sup> Von Rad interestingly contrasts this with the Canaanite cult in which sexuality was celebrated with sacred prostitution. Gerhard Von Rad. *Genesis: A commentary* (Philadelphia: West Minster, 1972), 60.

<sup>319</sup> Cassuto would agree with this conclusion. He states that "prohibition is clearly inferred." Cassuto, 58.

<sup>320</sup> Wenham, 33.

<sup>321</sup> Von Rad, 61.

<sup>322</sup> Westermann, 9.



overstated, it does reflect the sovereign power of the God of this text that is able to bring forth what he has said. Thus it was so!

### **Summary**

In closing, there are several creation themes that have come to the forefront via this text. First, the text has elucidated important aspects of the biblical creator, who was One, alone in the beginning and without an origin himself. He is a God who is self-sustaining and who is a thinking and conscious being. God hovered over the waters and worked not out of compulsion, but out of his will with creativity and order. He fashioned the environment and filled it with all that is needed to sustain life. Then he placed living beings in the center of their magnificent surroundings. The text also explicates the power of God as he spoke creation into being. Vs. 3 is the first occurrence in the text of the power of his spoken word by which God simply commands the creation into being.

In examining this initial text it has become clear that there was an orderly creation of which these verses refer. It is also evident that humans possess a designated position of authority in the created universe as being made in God's image and having dominion over the rest of creation. This universal position of honor emphasizes the unity of all humans, including both males and females of all ethnicities. This position of authority also brings responsibility and concern for the rest of creation. Finally, this text, though drawing one's mind to the created universe, exalts and honors the creator himself. As Mathews writes, "creation is theocentric, not creature centered. Its purpose is to glorify the Creator by magnifying him through the majesty of the created order."<sup>323</sup> Genesis 1 accomplishes just that, as the magnificence and power of the creator is displayed through creation itself.

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<sup>323</sup> Mathews, 113.

## **Genesis 2: Man and Woman in Paradise**

### **Introduction**

Genesis chapter 2 offers a more detailed account of creation, backtracking in order to fill in the particulars and intricacies of the creation story presented in Chapter 1. As Matthews notes, it is a “thematic elaboration” of the story already presented.<sup>324</sup> The creation of creatures and mankind from the dust of the earth, the placement of mankind in the garden of paradise, and the relational interlinking of all creation are themes that the text magnifies. As the climax of all creation as expressed in chapter 1, mankind becomes the central focus of chapter 2. Kidner expresses it this way: “The narrative works outwards from man himself to the man’s environment (garden, trees, river, beasts and birds) in logical as against chronological order, to reveal the world as we were meant to see it: a place expressly prepared for our delight and discipline.”<sup>325</sup> This detailed account greatly heightens our understanding of God and his loving relationship with his creation.

### **Exegesis**

#### **The Garden in Eden**

Gen 2 describes the creation of a magnificent garden in which the created man is placed. In the beginning of the description the reader is taken back to the time previous to the creation of plants. The earth is barren and unable to sustain life until up from the

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 189. Scholars vary on their interpretations of the creation narratives, however. Westermann states that the two creation narratives were separate and written at separate times. He states, “The editors who united Genesis 1 with Genesis 2 and 3 naturally were also aware of the fact that they were combining differing accounts of creation which originated during different periods.” See Westermann, 23. Gowan states a similar view when he writes, “Earlier interpreters assumed 2:4b-25 was a ‘flashback,’ a retelling of the events of day six in more detail, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. critical scholarship has agreed that this is a completely different version of creation. The full evidence for this must be sought elsewhere...” See Gowan, 33. Kline, on the other hand, writing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, states the following, “Since the genitive in this formula is uniformly subjective, the reference is not to the origin of *the heavens and the earth* but the sequel thereof, particularly the early history of the earthlings. The first part of this verse, therefore, must be taken not with the preceding but the following account, which is not, then, presented as another version of creation. *When they were created* is literally ‘in their being created’. This expression is used...to denote an era according to its opening and formative event.” See Kline, 83. My interpretation of this verse, which coincides with my affirmation of Mosaic authorship, agrees with Matthews and Kline in treating the Gen 2 creation narrative not as a separate account by a separate author, but as a more detailed account of Gen 1.

<sup>325</sup> Kidner, *Genesis*, 58.

earth God raises a river that, with its four subsidiaries, waters the garden and provides the basics sustenance for life. Likewise he creates shrubs, green plants, and trees that are good for eating, provide shade, and create a peaceful and beautiful environment for God's created beings. This paradise was a phenomenal outpouring of God's love, provision, and blessings. It was a place of protection and safety.<sup>326</sup> Eden (עֵדֶן), the name of the area surrounding the garden,<sup>327</sup> literally means 'delight, joy, pleasure, or luxury'.<sup>328</sup> The goodness of God's creation continues even in the details of the environment he creates for life. In contemporary times, gardens in the Middle East, according to Gowan, still reflect this initial beauty paradise as they are places of safety, beauty, and fertility.<sup>329</sup> The specific location of the Garden in Eden is unknown, though two of the rivers mentioned in vss. 10-14 are the Tigris and the Euphrates, which are known to us today. The other two rivers are possibly farther east since that appears to be the direction by which they are listed.<sup>330</sup> Not only does God provide water for life and sustenance, he also provides fruit bearing trees which provide food and shade in the garden. The garden is lush and green, a sign of health and vitality in the God's created order. The significance of the garden cannot be missed. God showers his love and provision on his created beings by creating for them an environment filled with everything needed for a life that is sustained and peaceful.

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<sup>326</sup> Waltke notes the meaning of the Hebrew term as referring to an area that is enclosed, or fenced off thereby creating a wall of protection. See Bruce Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 84.

<sup>327</sup> Mathews notes that the use of the preposition 'in' denotes that Eden was the surrounding area, not the name of the actual garden. See Mathews, 200. Westermann notes that the meaning of the preposition, בְּ, denotes 'part of'. See Westermann, 184.

<sup>328</sup> Gowan, 83; William L. Holladay, ed. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Koninklijke and Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), "עֵדֶן," 266. Westermann notes that Eden is a land of plenty, a "land of Bliss." See Westermann, 209.

<sup>329</sup> Gowan, 40.

<sup>330</sup> Kidner, *Genesis*, 63-64.

### The Formation and Work of Man

In contrast to the earth being created from what is traditionally accepted *ex-nihilo*, man (the first human) is formed from the substance of God's prior creation. Vs. 2:7 states that God formed the man (*ādām* - אָדָם) from the dust of the ground (*ādāmāh* - מִן-הָאָרֶץ). The word play evident in Adam's name is significant. The name by which he is called, adam, represents the substance from which his body is created, the earth,<sup>331</sup> and furthermore signifies mankind's interconnectedness to the rest of creation. Although God gave mankind dominion over the earth and all its creatures, and although mankind is made specifically in God's image, mankind is also humbled and unified with the rest of the created order. By being made of the substance of the earth, human beings share a similarity with creation. This commonality has potential to significantly impact the ways creation is treated and cared for. It is important to note that the animals of the earth are also made of the dust of the earth. According to chapter 1, they are not made in God's image and mankind has dominion over them, but they come into being by the same process as *ādām*, from the dust of the earth.

Another significant point from this text is the use of the verb יָצַר.<sup>332</sup> In the creation texts this verb is only used in referring to the formation of Adam and the creatures (vss. 7, 19). It has the meaning 'to create' or 'to form'. Most translations, including the NIV, ESV, and NAS, select the translation 'formed' in this verse. The choice of this Hebrew verb is indicative of the formation of the first human and animals from the dust of the earth. In the creation narratives these two particularities of the

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<sup>331</sup> See also, Gowan, 39; Kline, 83.

<sup>332</sup> Westermann includes a helpful discussion on the use of this verb. He cites P. Humbert in noting that in 42 out of 63 occurrences, God is the subject. Westermann and Walkte both mention the reference of this verb to denote that work of a potter creating a masterpiece out of clay. See Westermann, 203; Waltke, 85.

created order are the only created beings that originate from the dust of the earth. It is significant that this verb is reserved for these two instances. The use of this verb represents a creative thoughtful process. God took one substance and carefully manipulated it into an artful design. He artistically fashioned specific bodies for humans and all the animals. Those beings that breathe and move about are the physical manifestations made from the earth upon which they live and depend for their physical sustenance.

The culminating step of creation is the breathing of life into the formed but inanimate body of the man (vs. 7). It was by the very breath of God that the man came to life. God is responsible for his formation as well as his essence of being. Man is nothing without God. He has no formation, no internal energy, and no being. He is dependent on God for his very existence. This final step of creation, the breathing of life from God to man, is reminiscent of God's creating of the heavens and the earth by speaking them into existence. This is evidence that God's creative power originates from within himself. This sentence in the text does not denote any hint of God being the material cause of human life.<sup>333</sup> God simply breathes life into the man, the man is dependent on God, but the man remains ontologically different from his creator. The text is not explicit about how creatures received their breadth. It is likely that God breathed life into them as well, but that can only be surmised from the context, not from specific textual support.

Once the man is created God puts him in the garden (vss. 8 and 15). God draws boundaries for him and tells him what he can eat and what he cannot eat and entrusts him with the furthering of creation. In Gen 1, we saw that mankind, being made in God's image, was given dominion over the rest of creation. In Gen 2, the details of mankind's

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<sup>333</sup> See Westermann for a discussion on this point. Westermann, 206-207.

job are made more specific. God tells the man that he is to work the garden and take care of it. As Gunton states, “Genesis makes the human race both the crown of, and uniquely responsible for, the shape that creation takes.”<sup>334</sup> Furthermore he states that “those made in his image are placed in such a relationship to the world that they are called to play some part in its perfecting.”<sup>335</sup> Man is told to invest himself in the cultivating of the ground. Through that cultivating, the creation is fostered to blossom, grow and expand its beauty. Man is told not to abuse it the creation or use it only for his own benefit, but to treat it with care. God has filled creation his magnificent beauty and every piece was intended to intermingle with every other piece in a harmony that brings him glory.

Along with the opportunity to work alongside God in seeing the creation grow to its fulfillment, God also gave a warning to the man to not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (vs. 17).<sup>336</sup> The tree itself and its fruit are created good, as is all creation, but the fruit was not created for man’s consumption. God knew that all creation would be corrupted and that man would surely die if the fruit of that tree was eaten. Therefore, God *commanded* man to not eat of the tree (emphasis mine) . Mathews notes that this strong prohibition is of the same lexical style as is found in the ten commandments.<sup>337</sup> God firmly establishes a boundary around the tree for the man to honor and obey. The man has complete freedom to eat of the fruit of every other tree, but of this one, he must refrain. What is meant by the resultant death is debated amongst scholars. Mathews argues that the text never explicitly states that man was created

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<sup>334</sup> Gunton, 12.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>336</sup> Westermann includes a discourse outlining some of the discussion surrounding the two trees in the garden. See Westermann, 211-214.

<sup>337</sup> Mathews, 211.

immortal, but that immortality belongs only to God.<sup>338</sup> Therefore, he surmises that physical death is not the type of death implied by the text. Other scholars argue that the punishment of death is literal since, in this view, man was originally created without death.<sup>339</sup> Still others argue that the death was a spiritual death which “entails a loss of relationship with God and with one another.”<sup>340</sup> No matter the meaning of the penalty, God’s prohibition was clear. The man was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of good and evil. The consequence of disobedience would be severe. Having been given that warning, the man finds himself in a peaceful existence in a magnificent place of paradise, naming the animals as God brought them to him, and enjoying the harmony of creation in an interlinked coexistence. Something was amiss however, and that something led to God to his last initial act of creation, the creation of woman.

### **The Fashioning of the Woman**

Vs. 18 presents for the first time in the creation process, a moment when God determines that something is not good. This declaration is emphasized by word placement in the text.<sup>341</sup> Up to this point the text repeatedly states, ‘and it was good’ after all of God’s creative acts. But here, when man was in the garden in Eden, naming all the animals, God announces that his creation process is not yet complete. Adam has no partner. God declares that this is not good, so the texts tells us that God put Adam in a deep sleep and took a rib from his body. From that rib God fashioned Eve (vss. 20-22). The verb in this verse is בָּנָה, which means to build. In Genesis it is used in other verses to connate that building of a physical structure, but in this instance it refers to the

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<sup>338</sup> Mathews, 211-12.

<sup>339</sup> Westermann discusses the various readings. See Westermann, 224.

<sup>340</sup> Walkte, 87.

<sup>341</sup> Waltke, 213.

building of a human being from a rib bone of another. Being made from the man, the woman carries great significance to him. He calls her ‘bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh’ and names her Eve. She is made as his עֵזֶר, a term which, often translated as helper, connotes her as a strong warrior partner to Adam, rather than a subordinate assistant.<sup>342</sup> Adam and Eve together were to cultivate the garden and to have dominion over all creation. They were to work in harmony with God to complete the creative process and to watch over and care for the environment that God gave them. Adam and Eve together are the crown of God’s creative activity, reflect his image, and partner with him in the ongoing development of the world God has placed around them. It was good, and harmonious, and peaceful. God, the maker of heaven and earth, has completed his initial work of creation.

### Summary

In Gen 1 the reader is made aware of the existence of one monotheistic God who is the maker of heaven and earth. This God was existent in the beginning as his Spirit hovered over the chaotic primordial waters in anticipation of the created order that was to come. Gen 1 then described the categories of creation as containing the environment and then the creatures that fill it. The creative acts are commenced simply by the power of God’s spoken word and implicitly implied in the text as being a creation *ex-nihilo*. The crowning moment of creation lies in the ultimate creative act of creating mankind in

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<sup>342</sup> The term עֵזֶר is used in 108 verses and is used 13 times in reference to God and four times in reference to military actions. Examples include Gen 49:25 (God helps Joseph), Exod 18:4 (God saves Moses from Pharaoh), Deut 33:26, 29 (God helps Israel), 1 Chron 12:1 (mighty men help David in war), 12:21 (army commanders help David), Psalm 30:10 and 115:9 (God as helper). See also Aída Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 23-24. Gilbert Belezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible says about a Woman’s place in Church and Family* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 29.



God's image. Male and female, they are told to have dominion over all the earth and to multiply and fill it. Creation and created beings have a definite beginning.

In Gen 2, the reader is taken on a journey into the details of the creative process, in particular the creation of man and woman and the environment in which they are placed. The reader is given a description of a magnificent garden paradise located in Eden that is filled with rivers and trees and all that the creatures needed for their sustenance. The text then proceeds to describe the creation of man and animals from the dust of the ground and the woman from the rib of the man. The man and woman are given instructions as to their work and parameters, which, if followed, will ensure their peace with God and each other. They were given free reign to enjoy the fruits of all the trees except one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The theme of interconnectivity magnified in this text. It is indeed intriguing how all of creation is interwoven together. From God's created universe, the first man and the animals were created. From the first man the first woman was created. There is nothing that lies independent of the rest of creation and nothing that lies independent of God. All creatures and all inanimate objects are related in some way to God. As Niringiye notes, "The principle of the one and the many is embedded in creation: one origin and one process yielding many animate and inanimate beings."<sup>343</sup> This one monotheistic God who created the many is good and he created everything to be good and to be harmoniously connected. He gave the man and the woman the privilege of continuing on in developing this creation project. All is good and peaceful in the new creation.

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<sup>343</sup> Zac Niringiye, "In the Garden of Eden – I: Creation and Community" *JLAT* 5:1 (2010), 24.

## **Genesis 3**

### **Introduction**

At the end of Gen 2 the world is as it should be. God has created all the creatures of the universe and all that they need to survive. He has also created mankind in his image and given the first couple a plan and purpose in continuing on together and with God in the creative process. He has given them the proper boundaries of what is permissible and good for them. In Gen 3, however, disobedience and sin shatter this peaceful harmonious existence. What was good became isolated and sorrowful. The harmonious work that Adam and Eve previously embarked, became filled with strife and thistles and pain. The process that deteriorated God's creation began in the garden of paradise around that one forbidden tree. It is that portion of the creation story upon which we will now embark.

### **Exegesis**

The story is well known. Eve draws near to the tree of good and evil and engages in a conversation with the serpent, who convinces her that God didn't really mean she would die if she ate of the fruit of the tree of good and evil. The Serpent, according to the text, is an animal made by God, but is more 'crafty' (עָרִים) than any other (vs. 3:1). Perhaps the translation crafty leaves us with the wrong impression. This Hebrew word can also mean shrewd or subtle.<sup>344</sup> One aspect of the implication of this word is clear: the serpent was not filled with good intentions during this conversation. There are many interpretations of the meaning of the serpent, which Westermann presents in his commentary.<sup>345</sup> The most likely interpretation is that the serpent is Satan in disguise.

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<sup>344</sup> Interestingly, a very similar Hebrew word (עָרִים) means 'naked'. Awareness of one's nakedness was a result of the eating of the fruit of the tree, which the serpent encouraged.

<sup>345</sup> Westermann outlines four major views of the meaning of the serpent. Those are views are 1) The serpent is Satan. 2) The serpent is symbolical. 3) The serpent is mythological. 4) the Serpent is a clever animal. See Westermann, 236-37. Mathews notes the possibility supported by some scholars that the

This alerts the reader to a new aspect of creation that has not yet been revealed in the text. The questions regarding who Satan is and how he is created present themselves. We know from other texts that Satan is a fallen angel<sup>346</sup> who had the same capacity as humans to disobey and rebel against God.<sup>347</sup> By the time of Gen 3 he is already fallen and is fighting against God's goodness. The timing of his creation and fall, we do not know. Mathews notes, however, that the serpent's presence in the garden indicates that even as early as Gen 3, "opposition lurks in the garden."<sup>348</sup> This alters the view of the garden of paradise slightly and enhances Adam and Eve's charge to have dominion while cultivating and caring for the garden. Adam and Eve were supposed to have authority and wisdom. They were the crown of creation. In caring for the garden they were also called to protect it and themselves from the threat of the evil that lurked around them. This conversation with the serpent, who Eve mistakenly trusted, flipped the roles of the created order. Eve allowed herself to be a follower instead of a leader. She forgot who she was, an image bearer of God, and the serpent in his craftiness pounced on the opportunity. The serpent was indeed crafty and thus convinced Eve that she would surely not really die if she ate of the fruit of the tree. So she ate, and then turned to her husband 'who was with her' (apparently through the entire conversation). He also ate of the fruit of the tree of good and evil, a simple act that ushered in the distortion of the God's good creation and brought pain and suffering into an otherwise peaceful and harmonious world.

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serpent was Eve's own thoughts in her head. This option is less feasible since God actually addresses the serpent in the aftermath of the fall. See Mathews, 233 fn. 172. VonRad argues that in the narrators mind, this animal is part of God's creation and "not the symbol of a 'demonic' power and certainly not of Satan. Von Rad, 87.

<sup>346</sup> Angels are ministering spirits. See Hebrews 1:14. Millard Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine* (ed. Arnold Hustad; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1992, 2001), 156.

<sup>347</sup> See Peter 2:4 and Jude 6. Erickson, 158.

<sup>348</sup> Mathews, 233-34.

The result of Adam and Eve's disobedience is evident immediately. In realizing their nakedness cover themselves with fig leaves. Meanwhile, the sound of God's steps in the garden can be heard, and Adam and Eve try to hide from God. This response to God is a stark contrast to the intimacy that Adam and Eve shared with each other and God previous to their disobedience. Von Rad argues that the presence of God walking in the garden indicates that God dwelt amongst his people in the garden as opposed to dwelling in his heavenly place and coming down to the garden at certain times.<sup>349</sup> There is certainly an intimacy between God and mankind that has now been disturbed. The peaceful harmonious paradise is tainted with fear and shame and brokenness. God gives Adam and then Eve a chance to answer for their actions. Adam blames the woman God gave to him (i.e. he blames God who gave him the woman) (vs. 12), and Eve blames the serpent (vs. 13). Neither one of them takes responsibility for his/her actions which serves as evidence of the broken relationship that now ensues between each of them and their loving creator.

God's response to Adam and Eve's disobedience is integral to our study because it outlines the resultant fragmented creation in which we now reside and for which God is continually working to redeem. The results of the sin of Adam and Eve brought a curse to the serpent and to the ground, an act that can only be brought forth by God,<sup>350</sup> and consequences to Adam and Eve, which affect their entire lives and the lives of all their offspring.

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<sup>349</sup> Von Rad, 91. Mathews notes this "anthropomorphic description of God 'walking' in the garden suggests the enjoyment of fellowship between him and our first parents." See Mathews, 239. Waltke notes that God's presence in the garden after the fall evidences his unending love that doesn't quit even when the object of that love fails. See Waltke, 92.

<sup>350</sup> Mathews, 244.

The serpent was cursed to crawl on its belly and eat dirt, which, Westermann argues, sets it apart from the rest of the animal kingdom.<sup>351</sup> God announces its (Satan's) future destruction resulting from the heel of the offspring of the woman (the Messiah, whom God has already determined to redeem mankind). In the midst of the curse, God's final redemption of his creation can already be seen in seed form.

Additionally God cursed the ground as a result of Adam's sin and turned Adam's work into labor and a wrestling with thorns through hard work and sweat. No longer will Adam's work be a cultivating of beauty and peace. Instead it is identified with antagonism and destruction. The creation itself pays a price for the sin of Adam. It now groans for the redemption of man (Rom 8:22) and fights against man's attempt to cultivate it. The ground from which Adam was created now becomes his enemy. Evidence of the antagonistic relationship can be observed in the presence of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and droughts, all of which bring hardship and even death to mankind. The antagonistic relationship is a stark contrast to the harmonious peaceful paradise described in Gen 2. The restoration of that paradise is what mankind longs for in this current time of waiting for God's full redemption of all his creation.

The result to Eve is not a curse, but a punishment that affects her gift of child bearing. She continues to bring life into the world, but now she will bring that life into the world with pain and suffering sometimes to the point of death. Additionally, her relationship with Adam as his warrior partner is distorted. The text indicates that the woman will desire her husband and that he will rule over her (vs. 16). This verse has been interpreted in various ways. Some scholars indicate that the woman's loving desire

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<sup>351</sup> Westermann, 259.

for her husband is normal but that his response after the fall is to dominate her.<sup>352</sup> Other scholars read this verse as indicating that the woman will desire to rule over her husband but her desire will be thwarted and he will instead rule over her and resume, as some interpret, his rightful place to do so.<sup>353</sup> Given the understanding that woman was created (built) to be man's warrior partner in having dominion over the earth and in filling and multiplying on the earth, it fits appropriately to interpret the man's ruling over the woman as a distortion from the original created harmony that existed before the fall. It is interesting to note that the verb translated as 'rule' in this verse is different from the verb used in the creation account that describes mankind's dominion over the earth, which was described in this study as a care for creation and cultivating/protecting it. In this verse the word translated as rule has a harsh tone. It is also used to describe Cain's need to 'rule' over sin (Gen 4:7).

The text continues by describing two acts of love and provision by God to his people. First, God made coverings for Adam and Eve from animal skins (vs. 3:21). When God walked into the garden and found Adam and Eve hiding, he knew what they had done and he knew the consequences. God could have forced Adam and Eve to go forth for the remainder of their lives in the shame of nakedness,<sup>354</sup> but instead, in his love, he made coverings for them with animal skins. He did not want them to suffer the shame in its fullness. This act is perhaps, in seed form, a sign of God's future covering of grace that he accomplishes through the salvation of his Son, something that will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>352</sup> Gowan, 58.

<sup>353</sup> Wakte, 94. For greater details on the various interpretations of this verse, see Mathews, 251; Westermann, 262-63.

<sup>354</sup> Neyrey provides a helpful discussion of nakedness and shame in the biblical text. See Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

Second, God exiled Adam and Eve from the garden (vss. 22-24). God's exile caused Adam and Eve to leave the peaceful paradise that had been created for them. It was a harsh result to their sin, but it was also an act of love by a God who cares for them and seeks their protection. In vs. 22 we read that in the garden there was another special tree. This tree was the tree of life. God knew if Adam and Eve ate from the tree of life, then they would live for all eternity in their fallen state, and creation would never again experience the harmony that once was their reality. Although God is a just God and responds to the sin of his creation, he is equally as merciful and loving. He provides protection even for those who go against his will. So the entire chapter ends with the goodness of God while it leaves the creation in a fallen and disrupted state of existence.

### **Summary**

The important aspect to note in the inclusion of this section of Genesis is that creation, having been made good and harmonious and peaceful, has now been corrupted by the sin of Adam and Eve. This creation that reflected the glory of its creator and shown forth the harmony existent in the triune Godhead, has been severely tainted and the harmonious relationships that once characterized it have been antagonized. Instead of partnership and an interweaving of various displays of beauty and growth, each portion of creation now fights against the other. The ground works against man in his attempt to grow food and cultivate it, the woman's attempt to bring forth life into the world is aggravated by pain and danger, and the interpersonal relationship between the man and the woman has lost its harmony and interlinking unity. The world is a darkened place, with dimmed light. It is in desperate need of God's redemption and recreation.

## **Psalms**

### **Introduction**

The psalms are words from and of worship,<sup>355</sup> originally written to be used in the Jewish synagogues and temples.<sup>356</sup> They are musical poetry, which were communicated with passion and meaning that spanned the spectrum of joy-filled praise all the way to groans of lament.<sup>357</sup> There are one hundred and fifty psalms which are structured into five ‘books’ each beginning with Psalm 1, 42, 73, 90, and 107 respectively.<sup>358</sup> David authored the most psalms (seventy-three) of all the various authors.<sup>359</sup>

Creation is a common theme in the Psalms. God is referred to as the ‘maker’ of various aspects of creation in Psalms 95, 115, 121, 124, 134, 146, and 149. Other Psalms declare the earth as God’s possession or as containing his glory. Examples include Psalm 2, 8, 18, 24, 33, 46, 47, 57, 66, 72, 90, 104, 119. Psalm 33 reaffirms the creative power of God’s spoken word as found in Gen 1. Vs. 6 of Psalm 33 declares ‘by the word of the Lord, the heavens were made,’ and vs. 9 states, ‘For he spoke and it came to be.’ These examples and many others in the psalms affirm what has already been discovered in the Genesis texts. The two main psalms that will be examined in this section, Psalms 8 and 104, will specifically magnify God’s role as initial creator as well as his ongoing provision in sustaining that which He has created.

### **Psalm 8**

Psalm 8 magnifies the creator of the world and declares that his name is glorified by creation, even by the most vulnerable and weak, for God’s glory is not dependent on

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<sup>355</sup> John Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation* (London, New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 3.

<sup>356</sup> Charles Augustus Briggs and Emily Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Psalms* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1916), 1-xciii.

<sup>357</sup> Eaton, 9.

<sup>358</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms* (Cambridge: Tyndale Press, 1973), 4.

<sup>359</sup> Eaton offers a helpful discussion of authorship. See Eaton, 5-8.



human strength, but dependent on God alone. This psalm is reminiscent of the Genesis creation accounts and retains the goodness found in creation in the beginning of time.

Vss. 1 and 9 provide a boundary of praise to the Psalm with the exclamation, ‘O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!’ This line beautifully summarizes the exegetical focus of the entire psalm by exclaiming that in and by all animate beings and inanimate objects of creation, God’s name is brought forth and exalted. Everything on earth and in the heavens draws attention to God and not itself. The worship is directed to the Lord, *our* Lord, a personal intimate God who sits on the throne of the lives of his created people.<sup>360</sup> Vs. 2 parallels vs. 1 and gives more clarity by declaring that his glory is above the heavens. This phrase that is translated ‘above the heavens’ (עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם) is found also in Exodus when God tells Moses to stretch out his hands towards the sky. The metaphorical emphasis is to indicate that it is the entire expanse of God’s creation that reflects his glory. Eaton argues that this phrase indicates that the heavenly beings also give God glory.<sup>361</sup>

Vs. 2 declares that even from the weak and the helpless children and infants, God is praised and glorified. Offering another view, Tierrien states that the phrase translated as ‘children and infants’ refers to contexts of destruction in ancient contexts. He puts forth the option that this phrase could be connected to the second half of the verse, which mentions silencing the enemy and the avenger.<sup>362</sup> Perhaps the weakness of the children is analogous to the weakness of God’s people against their enemies, and yet, even in situations of apparent weakness, God’s glory shines above all else.

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<sup>360</sup> Kidner, *Psalms*, 66.

<sup>361</sup> Eaton, 81.

<sup>362</sup> Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 128.

Vss. 3 – 8 reflect the humble yet honored position of mankind in the created order. Although man is nothing without God and is totally dependent on him, God remembers and provides for him. God has crowned him with glory and honor, a phrase that finds companionship in the creation narratives in Genesis that highlight mankind being made in God's image. Vs. 6 reiterates the dominion that mankind has over the rest of creation. This dominion was initially pronounced in Gen 1:26 and remains a valid principle even in the times of the writing of the Psalm and even in the times of today.

The Psalm closes with a reiteration of vs. 1, 'O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!' which encloses the entire message in a song of praise and glory to God.

This psalm lifts up the name of God as the one to whom all glory must be given. He is the one who has established the order of the heavens, and even in the most vulnerable of all creation, he is glorified. He has placed mankind over the rest of creation to have dominion and to continue the work begun in the garden. The most spectacular aspect of this Psalm lies in the fact that the creation is said to give God glory even in its fallen state. Even in the condition of broken relationships and antagonism, the goodness of God's creation continues as does the participation of mankind's working with God in that creative process. The cosmic order is not what it was originally meant to be, but it is not completely destroyed either. God is still glorified and his ultimate purpose is still being achieved. God's name is still majestic in all the earth!

#### **Psalm 104**

Psalm 104 magnifies God's authorship over creation and his continued care for it. It links the primordial creative acts of God as narrated in Genesis 1 with the present provisions of sustenance even to the animals on earth. Meanwhile, God is praised,

glorified, exalted in the hearts of his people through the magnificent exaltation of his name. Scholars note the unmistakable similarity of Psalm 104 to Gen 1 most notably in the form of the poetry. Terrien draws notice to the eight strophes with the first seven correlating to the seven days of creation in Gen 1.<sup>363</sup>

The beginning phrase in vs. 1b, ‘Bless the Lord O my soul’ appears again in vs. 35 thereby blanketing the psalm in an atmosphere of praise. The inner verses present God’s creative magnificence which lifts the psalmist’s heart to praises that are addressed both to the ultimate creator and personal Lord. This richness is indicated in the address, ‘O Lord my God’ (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי) which is found in only nine psalms.<sup>364</sup> This address reflects the scope of God’s interaction with his creation, of which the psalm elaborates. Vss. 2-5 paint the creation as adornments of God. The light is a garment wrapped around him, the heavens are a tent, the clouds are his chariot, and the winds carry his message. These aspects of creation reveal his glory, his power and his sovereignty and are used by him for his purposes.

Vss. 5-18 harken the reader back to the mentioning of the primordial waters in Gen 1:2. Where Gen 1 gives the larger scope of the waters being gathered and contained within the proper boundaries, Psalm 104 provides the details of their usefulness as they flow over the mountains and into the valleys to water the trees and shrubs and provide sustenance for the animals.

Vss. 19-23 explicate the usefulness of the night for the beasts of the field and lions to move about and seek their provision which God himself provides for them. As

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<sup>363</sup> Terrien, 710. Briggs likewise notes the similarity of the order of the text in the Psalm to that of the Genesis narrative. He additionally makes note of the emphasis on the “divine activity rather than the result” in the Psalm. See Briggs, 2:230-31.

<sup>364</sup> Terrien notes that the name Yahweh (יְהוָה) means “He who causes to be”. See Terrien, 712.

the daylight dawns, the night animals go to rest and mankind awakens to go about his work on the earth in safety from the lions and beasts. As the psalm progresses the reader is made more aware of how it is God who provides the sustenance and life for his all of his creation and how without his sustenance, creation dies.

This psalm presents a smooth and continuous presence of God from the beginning of creation to the present. In the beginning he created all things, put them in place, and set their boundaries. In the days to follow, he sustains that creation and provides the food for every living creature and being. Vss. 31-35 lift up praises to God and worship him for all of his creative and provisional acts that this Psalm explicitly and implicitly attributes to him

### **Chapter 3: Conclusion**

The presentation of creation in the Old Testament began with Genesis, which presents the reader with foundational creation themes. The text highlighted that the creator is one monotheistic God who alone created the world and everything in it. The earth and heavens were created by the power of his spoken word while mankind and animals were created from the dust of the earth. All of creation is ordered and intricately interwoven with the rest of creation. Genesis describes in detail the creation of mankind as being made in God's image as the climax of the creative process. It explicates mankind's place as having dominion over the rest of creation and being called to care for it and tend to it. As God created the world, it was good, indeed very good.

Genesis then continues to describe the garden in Eden that God created for the first man and the first woman and all the beauty and peace that permeated their lives. Deceit entered the scene however, and Adam and Eve lost their innocence and their free

and open relationship with God, and they and their descendants were removed permanently from the garden. The ground and the deceiver, the serpent, were cursed. The ground now groans and works against mankind. Adam and Eve were punished and into their lives entered sorrow, pain and toil. By the end of chapter 3, it seems that all goodness is lost and humans are left with a creation that only remotely resembles the world as God initially created it.

The Psalms however, give an encouraging account of hope as the creation is said to magnify God's name and give him glory. The heavens and the moon and stars still bear God's goodness and mankind still holds the honor of caring for creation. The creation is still intricately designed and God is still working consistently to provide food and water to the creatures and beings he has created. God has not given up on his creation. It still bears his name even though it is tainted from the fall of mankind and is restricted in its beauty. Still the witness of God's handwork and sustaining power cannot be stifled. God's glory cannot be contained.

Despite the goodness that shines through creation even in its fallen state, there is a longing for a complete restoration of the unified, pure, whole creation that God initially brought forth. There has been a violation against God that must be rectified. Creation, although continuing to give glory to God, groans for the redemption of man. Natural disasters give evidence of the battle that rages within creation and between the nature and mankind. This is a battle that was not existent during the days of Adam and Eve's tenure of paradise in the garden in Eden. In answer to the desperate need for restoration, it is God, the one who created and sustains his creation, who provides the remedy. His remedy, the sending of his only son to pay the penalty for the first and all sins is

developed in the text of the New Testament. In the next chapter, we will examine Jesus' role in creation and new creation, particularly as it is elucidated in the book of Colossians.

## Chapter IV: New Testament: Colossians

### Colossians 1:15-20<sup>365</sup>

<sup>15</sup> ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, <sup>16</sup> ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὀρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται· <sup>17</sup> καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν, <sup>18</sup> καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας· ὃς ἐστὶν ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, ἵνα γένηται ἐν πασιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων, <sup>19</sup> ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι <sup>20</sup> καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν, εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ, [δι' αὐτοῦ] εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.<sup>366</sup>

### Introduction

The New Testament continues to affirm the Old Testament's claim that God is the Maker of Heaven and earth, but in the New Testament, there is an additional development that brings the topic of creation to fullness. The New Testament affirms the presence and active participation of the triune Godhead by emphasizing the role of Jesus, the second person of the trinity. I Cor 8:6 clearly synthesizes the message of creation in the Old and New Testaments. It reads, '...there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and the one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.' God is recognized as creator while Christ's importance is magnified. John 1:1-3 gives strong evidence of Christ's presence in the

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<sup>365</sup> BibleWorks, Greek and ESV.

<sup>366</sup> English Standard Version, BibleWorks. Vss. 21-29 can be found in the Appendix.

beginning of creation when it states that ‘the Word was with God...in the beginning’ and that ‘without him nothing was made.’ Additionally, Hebrews 1:2 affirms that it is through Christ that the world was made.<sup>367</sup> Of all the examples in the New Testament that attest to the presence and role of Christ in creation and new creation, the most extensive is Colossians 1:15-20.

Colossians is one of the shortest letters in the New Testament. It is a letter that was written to a young congregation in Colossae, which was only a few months, or perhaps only a few weeks in its inception at the time of the writing of this letter.<sup>368</sup> Its authorship is not free from debate.<sup>369</sup> Some scholars attribute the letter to Paul,<sup>370</sup> while others attest this view. Most who attest Pauline authorship support the view that it was written by one of his disciples.<sup>371</sup> Paul, a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin, after having been abruptly interrupted and converted by Jesus, became an apostle of Christ to the Hebrews first and then the Gentiles.<sup>372</sup> As a result of his ministry to the Ephesians, the gospel spread to Colossae. This young church, having received the Gospel of Jesus Christ, was being bombarded by false teachings, which their proponents called ‘philosophy’. These teachings urged the young believers to worship angelic beings and to trust in them for “protection from cosmic powers and principalities”<sup>373</sup> rather than

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<sup>367</sup> Sean McDonough has written extensively regarding Christ’s role in creation and these verses in particular. See Sean M. McDonough, *Christ as Creator: Origins of a New Testament Doctrine* (Oxford, University Press, 2009). See also, Gunton, for a discussion of creation with a Trinitarian focus.

<sup>368</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *Colossians and Philemon* (NCB; Pasadena: Oliphants, 1978), 7.

<sup>369</sup> Moule offers a lengthy discussion on the historical authorship debate of Colossians. See C.R. D. Moule, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), 13-37.

<sup>370</sup> P.T. O’Brien, “Letter to the Colossians” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 147.

<sup>371</sup> McDonough, 172.

<sup>372</sup> For a precise and accurate overview of Paul see John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: Broadman & Holdman Publishers, 1999).

<sup>373</sup> Edward Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (ed. Helmut Koester; trans. William Poehlmann and Robert J. Karris; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 3.



living out the freedom of the Gospel. Responding to this threat was Paul's impetus in writing the letter.

The attraction for the present study to this text is not rooted in the false teaching or in Paul's apostleship per se, but rather is in the focus on creation and Christ's role in the process as is expounded in the section known as the 'Christ hymn' or the 'Hymn of Praise of Christ' (vss. 1:15-20).<sup>374</sup>

The most strategic reason for including this hymn in this present study is due to its expansion of the Biblical concept of the triune monotheistic creator as it strategically focuses on the role of Jesus in creation. McDonough sets this hymn apart when he notes that this hymn "presents perhaps the most extended and theologically dense treatment of the theme of Christ as agent of creation."<sup>375</sup> This text serves to expand the understanding of the second person of the monotheistic yet triune God presented in the Biblical text,<sup>376</sup> and further expands our understanding of the relationship of the creation to the creator and the ramifications thereof for life on this earth and beyond.

### **Exegesis**

The hymn begins in vs. 15 with the phrase, εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ (image of God) in referring to Jesus Christ. Similar to its use in Gen 1, the word translated as image (εἰκὼν in the Greek and בְּצִלְמֵנוּ in the Hebrew), demands attention. When speaking of mankind, the term 'image' signifies a representation of God in that mankind, being created and dependent on God, somehow reflects his being. It is further defined by the phrase 'in our likeness' (בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ). This dignified position exalts mankind above all other aspects of

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<sup>374</sup> Martin provides a helpful overview of how this pericope had been classified and analyzed by scholars up to the time of his writing. See Martin, 62.

<sup>375</sup> McDonough, 173.

<sup>376</sup> For the purpose of this study, the triune nature of the Godhead as presented in the Biblical text is presupposed.

creation. In this present context however, the use of the term image contains a deeper meaning. Being the second person of the Godhead, he is “first of all, *himself* God.”<sup>377</sup>

This text emphasizes the deity of Christ and clarifies that he is the actual physical manifestation of the trine God, the visible image of what is invisible. He is exalted above all and in his image, humans have been created.

The second part of the verse, ‘the firstborn of all creation’ (πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως) could be confusing to many if it is not taken in conjunction with the ὅτι clause that gives it clarification.<sup>378</sup> The meaning of the clause ‘to be first born of all creation’ does not mean for Paul that he was actually born in the manner of the created beings and objects of the world. The clause that follows states that he created all things and therefore could not be born in the same category as the phenomenal manifested world. The meaning of being first born in the context of this passage can be described as being “the first among created things.”<sup>379</sup> It reflects his eternally given position as ruler and is more accurately considered in the sense of supremacy, rather than in a temporal sense.<sup>380</sup> This supremacy of Christ is explicated in the following verses.

Vs. 16 begins a section that provides the details that deduce the comprehensive scope of Christ’s Lordship. The adjective ‘all’ (πάντων<sup>381</sup>) is all encompassing and should be taken literally not figuratively. Everything in the created universe both the manifested phenomenal world as well as the invisible spiritual realm are under the

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<sup>377</sup> Hendricksen, 71.

<sup>378</sup> This is also supported by vs. 17 (in him all things hold together). See McDonough, 187.

<sup>379</sup> See. Moule, 63.

<sup>380</sup> Moule, 64. Lightfoot reflects on the genitive in this clause as further supporting the fullness of Christ’s authority over *all* creation. See Lightfoot, 148.

<sup>381</sup> This is neuter and plural and is translated as ‘all things’.

authority of Christ, who is the creator of them all. This includes heaven and earth, rulers and authorities, and everything else within the categories these terms represent.

The beginning of vs. 16, 'For by him all things were created...', is especially significant in light of the overall scope of this study. The preposition ἐν (in) must be interpreted in light of the full passage. Moule argues that 'in him' is used both instrumental and local meaning both 'by means of him and within him.'<sup>382</sup> It is significant that this preposition does not indicate 'from him' meaning: by means of his actual body.<sup>383</sup> This is a crucial clause in light of the overall focus of this study in understanding both the Vedic and Biblical concepts of creation. Creation is not made of the material substance of Christ, it is made from nothing (*ex nihilo*) or out of the dust of the ground as was presented in Gen 1 and 2.

Vs. 18 mentions Christ's body, but again, not in the sense of material causation as in the Vedic corpus or in the Iranian concepts concurrent to the time of the writing of this text,<sup>384</sup> but in the sense of being that over which Christ rules, much in the same way that the brain rules over the rest of the body. Although there is debate regarding the meaning of the word, body,<sup>385</sup> vs. 18 explicitly states that the body of Christ is the church, not the entire cosmos.<sup>386</sup> This does not take away the principle that Christ has authority over all creation. He is still directing it, distinguishing its parts, and causing it to move as one cohesive unit. Christ is the means by which all of creation is unified and drawn together.

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<sup>382</sup> Moule, 65.

<sup>383</sup> McDonough provides a helpful discussion of this verse and the use of the prepositions. See McDonough, 18, fn 25; 187.

<sup>384</sup> The Iranian Pahlavi text indicates that the "supreme God became pregnant and brought forth the entire creation." See Lohse, 53.

<sup>385</sup> Lightfoot, Lohse, Hendriksen interpret this term, body, to mean 'the church', while Moule interprets it to mean the cosmos. see Lightfoot, 157; Lohse, 55; Hendricksen, 76; Moule, 68-69.

<sup>386</sup> It is helpful to note that in vs. 24 of the same chapter, Christ's body is also explicitly identified as the church, so the initial reading holds credence as well. Christ's body as the church, represents a smaller reconciled group found within the larger body, the cosmos.

But when the bible speaks of Christ's body, it is a different meaning and concept from when Hindu philosophers speak of the cosmos being the body of *Brāhman*. In the biblical texts, the body of Christ is his church, the gathering of those who believe in him and follow him. Vs. 19 emphasizes the purposeful and inherent benevolence of the entirety of creation dwelling under the authority of Christ and of the unity amongst the triune Godhead in support of his authority. The message of unity engulfs the biblical themes of creation despite the apparent differences that permeate the phenomenal world.

Vs. 20 begins a section in the text that presents the essence of the good news of the New Testament. It also ties together the beginning from the end, much like the phrase "thou art that" did in the study of the Vedas. Verse 20 states that not only is all creation under the authority of Christ as the body is to the head, but all creation, which groans for redemption,<sup>387</sup> is reconciled to God, only through him. This reconciling, which is needed due to the fall of mankind, is made possible only through the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>388</sup> It is by the shedding of his blood that redemption can take place. This is important for two specific reasons: a) the acceptance of this reconciliation is the knowledge (or belief) that is needed upon death to move into the fullness of presence of God for all eternity and b) this redemption is accurately viewed as a re-creation.

First, the knowledge of Christ's work on the cross and the belief in his lordship over all creation and every life is what reconciles creation to God (vs. 22). In using the language of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, it is the right knowledge that one must pursue. With that right knowledge and submission under it, one is escorted into the eternal

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<sup>387</sup> Romans 8:19-22.

<sup>388</sup> Accounts of the death and resurrection of Christ can be found in the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

presence of God.<sup>389</sup> Vs. 22 states that the person who is reconciled is the same one who will be presented as holy and blameless and beyond reproach. The only method by which one is reconciled is the work of Jesus on the cross. Therefore, Christ's work encompasses his role as creator as well as redeemer of that creation.

Second, as McDonough emphasizes, Christ's redeeming work is recreational at the cosmic level. This salvation work is "the full flowering of what was made in the beginning,"<sup>390</sup> including the material creation.<sup>391</sup> This recreation does not refer to what was noted in the examination of the Vedic texts as the cyclical re-creation of the entire universe at the end of each *kalpa*. Rather, it refers to what is in this present time a continual transformative process and renewal, and also what will one day be the one and only end of the world and the creation of the new heavens and earth. Jesus' re-creational power could be seen in his life on earth as he healed the sick and restored the lepers. The prison of disease is a direct result of the fall of mankind. Jesus' power to heal diseases<sup>392</sup> both in person while on earth and even in our present times is evidence of his future holistic re-creation and restoration of what the world was originally meant to be. Additionally, his calming of the storm on the sea<sup>393</sup> shows his re-creational and redemptive power over a creation that presently rages and longs for its redemption. The work of Christ as creator and redeemer restores mankind and all of creation with them.

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<sup>389</sup> This text does not explicitly explicate the steps after death in the detail that the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* does, but the counterpart message is communicated in this and other texts which include Romans 10:9-13 and John 14:6.

<sup>390</sup> McDonough, 189.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>392</sup> Examples include Mt 8:2 (Jesus heals the leper), Mat 8:7 (the centurion's Servant), and Luke 5:17-25 (the man was lowered through the roof and was healed).

<sup>393</sup> Mat 8:24-26.

### Summary

Colossians 1:15-20 is an appropriate New Testament pericope to compliment the narrative that progresses throughout the Old Testament texts. It affirms the creation of the universe by one monotheistic conscious God, but expands the reader's comprehension of that God to include Christ, the second person of the trinity as the one to whom has been given authority over creation. Christ is described as the one who redeems and recreates. The connectedness of creation as corporately originating from the power of God is further enhanced. Christ is an agent of all creation and under his lordship all creation exists. As in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, a right knowledge that affects the next steps after this life on earth, is explicated in the text. Along with helpful other texts, it is made clear that the knowledge (belief) in Christ's death and resurrection gives one the key to entering into the presence of God for all eternity. Christ is not only the creator, he is the redeemer of all, both the creatures and creation. Through his work, there is re-creation both present in seed form in on this earth, and in the final days when the heavens and the earth will be recreated.<sup>394</sup> This pericope in Colossians brings to completion the first half of the story of creation and leaves the reader waiting for the final act, the end of the present suffering and the new creation of the heavens and earth that will restore the peaceful paradise described in Gen 2. Colossians gives the reader hope and anticipation of what is yet to come.

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<sup>394</sup> This new heaven and new earth is described in Revelation 21.

## **Part II: Conclusion**

The texts selected from the bible have provided a comprehensive view of the creational themes in the biblical canon. First, the texts provide important information regarding the creator. Gen 1 affirmed that the God of the bible was alone at the time of creation. It tells us that the universe was void and dark and the primordial waters covered the expanse, over which the Spirit hovered. Present, according to this text, at creation was God the Father and God the Spirit, two persons of the monotheistic Godhead. Gen 1 also exemplified the sovereign power of God, by demonstrating the resultant creation simply from his spoken word. He spoke, and creation came into being. It not only came into being, but it was ordered into relationships and categories. These acts of God present his consciousness and affirm that he is a thinking, planning, purposeful creator.

The Genesis account also enlightens the reader to the nature of the creation itself. First, the creation is dependent on God for its very existence. If in the beginning there was nothing, and if out of that nothing creation originated by the power of God's spoken word, then the creation can claim no merit for its own existence either in the beginning or in the days following. The creator God, who is dependent on nothing, originates and sustains his dependent creation. Second, the creation is comprehensively under the creative power of the same creator and of the non-human creation. The text says of all creation, 'it was good'. In their goodness lie the intended interconnected relationships between all the elements of creation. God sets the relationships of the water to dry land, birds in the air, fish in the sea, beast of the field and all the vegetation in motion as he determines the boundaries for each and the properties that define their limitations and existence.

Humans, in this account, are given a privileged position as being made in God's image. The creation of humans is the climax of creation and it was only after the creation of humans that God said it was *very* good. Not only do humans reflect God's image, but humans also reflect God's authority in that God has given humans dominion over the earth. This dominion is a responsibility to care for the earth and its inhabitants while being fruitful and filling it with descendants.

Finally, God gave humans and all the moving creatures of the earth, all the green plants and vegetation to eat as sustenance. God not only created them and placed them in a habitat meant for life, but he also provided a regular provision of food to sustain them. These acts of God seem to reflect an aspect of his being that cares and provides for the creatures he has created. There seems to be an underlying affection or love that binds the wholeness of creation together. He made certain that the creatures were cared for and watched over by the humans who were made in his own image, and he made certain that all beings requiring sustenance had what they needed to grow and be sustained on the earth.

Gen 2 highlights the specific creation of mankind and the environment God created for them. Being made of the dust of the earth, humans, though also made in God's image, share the same physical elements as the rest of creation. While having dominion over that creation, mankind humbly attributes his physical body to the created earth and it is back to that earth that the body shall return after death. God breathes life into the body that was created and gives the man his sustenance. God places the man in a garden of paradise located in the east of Eden. Fruit bearing trees, animals, and streams of life giving water fill the garden and provide all the creatures and plant life with the



sustenance needed for growth. Gen 2 continues to describe the creation of mankind, specifically that of the woman. God creates her out of the first man's rib and they become united as partners as they watch over, care for, and develop the creation that God has begun. By the end of Gen 2 the reader is awed by the holistic beauty of the initial creation and of God's provision for the creatures and humans that live in this beauty. God is not only a powerful creator, he is also a creator who provides for and sustains that which has been created.

In Gen 3, brokenness and disruption are introduced into the land of paradise. The serpent tricks Adam and Eve, and they disobey his command and boundaries. Upon their eating of the forbidden fruit, their innocence is lost and their relationship with God and with the rest of creation is damaged. The ground now fights them, they fight each other, and they become estranged from the God who created them with such love and care. They are kicked out of the garden partly in an act of punishment, but also in an act of care and concern. If left in the garden, they may eat the tree of life and would be forced to live in their fallen state for all eternity. Even after mankind disobeys God and causes destruction to all creation, God still cares for his creation and moves forward to redeem it.

The selections from the Psalms connected the reader back to the original creation. Psalm 8 magnifies the glory of God and the magnificence of his name. It acknowledges his hand in laying out the heavens and entrusting humans with dominion over his creation. The power of his spoken word in creation is affirmed in Psalm 33. Psalm 104 affirms his original creative power as well as his continual provision of his creation. It draws attention to God's provision of food to the lions and beasts of the night, while it

affirms that they go to lie down during the when humans arise to do the work God has for them. The Psalms, being written centuries after the original fall of mankind, a fall that affected every aspect of creation and is evident each and every day, affirm the beauty and glory that shines brightly even in the fallen universe. God's glory and the goodness of his creation cannot be blackened. The heavens still stretch out to shine forth his expanse, the waters still flow to provide sustenance to the vegetation and creatures, and God is still actively causing his creation to grow and expand. God's hand has not been lifted. God has not rejected his fallen world and people. God is, in fact, very focused on the redemption of his world, as this section from the Old Testament testifies.

Colossians 1:15-20, is a powerful representation of God's response to the fallen state of creation and its need for redemption. In the presentation of the creator God, Col 1 highlights the second person of the trine Godhead, Jesus Christ, who is the visible image of the invisible God. He is affirmed as not only being present at the creation events but the text states that he was an agent in that creation. He gave birth to creation and is the one who sustains it. This accompanying text affirms that the full triune monotheistic God of the Bible who was present in the beginning of time, was triune even then, and acted in unity to create the cosmos. Furthermore, the text affirms the authority of Christ as the authority over this creation and the head of his body, the church.

Christ is also affirmed as the one who redeems his creation and re-creates it from its fallen state. Colossians addresses this fallen state and declares that in the death of Christ on the cross, and through his blood, all creation is redeemed. It is the knowledge and belief of this event and of the Lordship of Christ that one's post-death fate is determined. Christ, gave his blood as sacrifice not in order to create the universe in its

original manifestation through bodily distribution, as the Vedic texts narrate, but rather to re-create it by offering a means of redemption from its fallen state. Through this act of sacrifice and love, creation is offered the hope of returning to the unified, cohesive state that it once occupied. In this passage the love and care of God for his creation is further magnified as God gives himself for the benefit of the manifested world.

In light of the themes presented in these texts, there remains the question of whether there is any practical application from these texts in the lives and relationships of the adherents of the Bible. Is there any aspect of Biblical creation that changes the way people view one another or view God? Certainly, there are. The texts exalt the triune Christian God above everything else in all creation including humans, nature, and creatures. The tendency for humans to exalt other things or people above God is a strong and powerful temptation, but the temptation cannot nullify the message as presented in Genesis and Colossians. There is none greater than God. He is the one who created the heavens and the earth and everything in the entire universe. He is the only one worthy of exaltation.

Second, the creation texts present nature and created beings as being powerfully created by the voice of God. They were declared good. Humankind has been given dominion over the earth, i.e. to be responsible and give care. The acknowledgement of God's magnificent creation of the phenomenal world brings with it a responsibility to properly care for the creation while enjoying the benefits that it provides, such as food and sustenance. Adherents of the bible should be the first in line to combat abuses to the creation and the wasting of its resources.

Third, the equal treatment and call to responsibility of Adam and Eve challenges the human tendency to create hierarchy and mistreat other humans. When God created mankind (male and female), gave them the green plants to eat, gave them dominion over the earth and its creatures, and told them to be fruitful and multiply. He gave each of them the same equal treatment and the same instructions and call. According to the biblical texts God created humans with equal status in his creation. Adherents of the Biblical texts, if taking the creation accounts seriously, would do everything possible to rid their own lives of condescension and to fight against inequality in the world around them.

Finally, adherents of the bible, if honoring the creation texts, would seek the right knowledge and belief in the redemptive and recreational acts of Christ. They would understand the context of that redemption as restoring the universe to the original created state through the sacrifice of Christ, who possesses all authority over it.

The creation texts in the Bible cannot be ignored and they cannot be overlooked. They are foundational to the understanding of right relationships with the creation, with God, and with mankind.

### **Part III: Analysis and Comparison**

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

This journey through the creation texts of the Vedas and the Bible has been intriguing and insightful as the gems of each tradition have been exposed and considered. The creation texts within each tradition have enormous potential to effect the way life is lived out, the focus of that life during one's existence on earth, and the relationships that are ensued along the journey. The reflections respective of each tradition were voiced in the conclusions of Part I and Part II respectively. Therefore, the purpose of this conclusion is not to reiterate what has already been concluded, but to take a step forward in the analysis and to observe the commonalities and differences between the creational themes of the two traditions. If the reader is of one of the two traditions, then this section might as well, provide an opportunity to deepen one's own convictions as well as his/her understanding of the other tradition represented.

### **Thematic Reflection**

#### **Darkness and Chaos**

One theme found in the texts of both traditions is the presence of darkness, void, and chaos in the beginning before creation. Both traditions refer to primordial waters that covered the earth, signifying an unbound lack of life and incessant smothering. It was out of this void that each creator instigates manifestation of objects and beings. It is important to note that in each tradition, the creation has some sort of beginning. It may be for many Vedic scholars, that that beginning is the beginning of a new *kalpa* and not the very beginning of all existence, but there is still the sense of something new that had not existed in the recent previous. For many Biblical scholars, the texts examined also represent a beginning, though there is no support in these texts nor anywhere else in the

biblical corpus to support a cyclical cycle that would indicate that this beginning is one of many. The biblical text does not explicitly support a linear beginning, but it is more likely given the overall context. Despite this difference in the meaning of the term ‘beginning’, both contexts present the creation of something that was not yet present. Rather, there existed a void that was inhabited by the subsequent creation.

### **God/One Existed Alone**

In each of these texts there is also a unified presentation that in the beginning the creator, whether termed Existence, One, the *Puruṣa*, *Prajāpati*, *Skambha*, or God is said first to have existed and second to have existed alone. In all of the Vedic and Biblical texts examined in this study, there is agreement that some creative being existed without a second. In the Vedic texts, the original Being, termed Existence, the One, the *Puruṣa*, *Prajāpati*, *Skambha*, is also considered to be alone. In the RV X.129, there was nothing in the beginning except the breath of Existence. In RV X.121 the Golden Germ arose without a second. Hymn RV X.90 does mention the presence of the gods at the time of the sacrifice, but this mentioning does not mean that the *Puruṣa*, or that some previous Being was not alone before this moment of bodily dismemberment.

In the Biblical texts, this being is a monotheistic, yet triune Godhead, in which each person of the trinity completes his role in conjunction with the others. There is a unity amongst the godhead. This godhead, viewed as one monotheistic God, created alone in the beginning.

There is also agreement between the traditions that this being was/is a conscious Being and is capable of making decisions. In the Vedas, *Puruṣa* decisively created out of his own body (or at least consciously permitted the gods to sacrifice him.) In the *Nāsadīya Sūkta* the One ‘emerged’, showing instigation of power and consciousness to

bring about some change in its state of being. Though questions regarding specific details about this original Being are left unanswered, the texts high support a conscious thinking act that began the universe, or at least began this cycle of existence.

In the Biblical texts, it is stated that God's Spirit 'hovered over the waters.' This hovering indicates a possible pondering, a planning, or a waiting for the appropriate timing of the first creative acts. At the right moment, God began to speak creation into being. He then proceeded to create each aspect of creation in its proper relationship to the other parts. He created mankind at the climax, but retained its commonality with the rest of the created order by creating man and the creatures out of the ground. God's creation was not haphazard or by chance as it shows an orderly coherent development. In both the Vedic and Biblical texts the original being who is credited for the creation of the world, is understood to be a conscious thinking being, thereby indicating that the creation acts themselves were purposed and planned.

Given these important understandings of the creator, it is important to recognize that within each tradition there are numerous beliefs within the traditions. Even regarding God's existence Clooney writes, "The sides on the debate about the induction of God's existence cannot be simplified to 'the Hindu position' verses 'the Christian position.' There is no likelihood that all Christian theologians will agree on a position opposed by all Hindu theologians, nor vice versa."<sup>395</sup> Likewise, Woodburne states that there is not one Hindu idea about God, but there are many "ideas of God."<sup>396</sup> Many Hindu (or Vedic) thinkers base their philosophy of this Ultimate Being on the Vedic texts while Biblical thinkers rely in the Bible. This foundation is important because in some

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<sup>395</sup> Clooney, *Hindu God*, 60.

<sup>396</sup> A.S. Woodburne, "The Idea of God in Hinduism." *The Journal of Religion* 5:1 (Jan., 1925), 52.



philosophies that are built in the Vedic texts, it is believed that nothing can be said about the Ultimate Being. On the other hand, it is also said that this Being can be described in a multiplicity of ways. It is therefore, impossible to make one general statement that would represent all the beliefs of the Vedic thinkers. Though there is a little more continuity amongst Biblical thinkers, and though there are clear definable methods by which God can be described, there are still a multiplicity of ways that theologians talk about God and his acts throughout history. Although this observation does not deter what is seen in the texts themselves, it is however important to be aware of in a study of this nature.

### **Creation and Its Substance**

In both the state of the universe and in the presence of a creator being, the texts seem to find a unity, but when referring to the substance used in the creation of the universe, the texts vary greatly. In the Vedic texts, the substance of the original being was sacrificed and the body of that original being, the *Puruṣa* man was used as the material essence of the creation itself. In the *Skambha* the creation is found within the limbs of the Supreme Being and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* affirms that the essence of 'Thou' is the essence of 'That'. In the Vedic conception of creation, the creator being is both the material and efficient cause of the universe. There is a unity in creation that goes deeper than the common creator. The interconnectivity extends from the use of the same material substance for all of creation.

Counter to the Vedic conception, the Biblical texts support the reading that the universe was initially created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). Though not all scholars read the text with this interpretation, it is certainly possible and certainly supported by many scholars both traditionally and in contemporary discussions. Gen 1 affirms that God initiated creation by his spoken Word. He simply spoke and the heavens and the earth

came into existence. This text testifies to the power of God to simply speak commands that instigate change from nonexistence to existence. Subsequently, Gen 2 affirms that while humans and animals came into being by God's spoken word as well, they were created not *ex-nihilo*, but rather out of the dust of the ground that God had previously created. With his breath, God breathed life into the first man. God then proceeded to make the man's partner, woman, from the man's rib. In the Biblical text, God is the efficient cause, but not the material cause.

This point of the discussion regarding the material versus efficient cause of creation is a major and significant difference between the Vedic and Biblical worldviews. According to the Vedas, a common originating material that interconnects every aspect of creation unifies the universe. Although different in phenomenal appearance, all the elements of the universe have this common denominator. This was most significantly emphasized in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* when Śvetaketu learns from his father 'tat tvam asi'. At the deepest level, all things share this essence from creation.

In the Biblical texts, there is a distinction amongst the various aspects of the universe. Although unified by the common denominator of being initiated into existence by God, there is no indication that the material substance is consistent, except for the creation of man and creatures from the earth. The original substance of creation is not God himself. There is a unity, but not of material essence. The unity in the biblical creation texts is formed on the basis of God's initial creation and subsequent creation being formed from that initial creation, as well as the unity expressed in the Colossians passage which declares Christ as having authority over all aspects of creation. The

material differences found in the created universe are covered by an overall unity of submission to Christ.

In summary, despite significant differences in the understanding of the material substance of the universe, these two traditions hold in common the belief that there is a unity, an interconnectedness that holds all creation together. This is a significant common theme, but the differences and details that fill in the pieces under this umbrella significantly separate the two worldviews represented by these texts. These differences also effect how we might define the term ‘creation’. In the Vedic texts, creation is a dissemination of the substance of the original Being. It is a distribution of one’s own essence and the formation of it into different forms, shapes, and meanings. In the Biblical texts, creation resembles that of a craftsman taking a foreign substance and molding it into something new. Therefore the differences between these texts and the concepts that emerge from them begin to make themselves known, despite the many commonalities that are present between them.

### **Creation’s Role**

Within the Vedic conception of creation especially considering the unified material substance of origination, there is, at least according to the texts that have been examined in this study, an overall lack of hierarchy in the ‘members’ of creation, whether inanimate objects, animate beings, or even members of different *castes* (or *varnas*).<sup>397</sup> Although the *Puruṣa Sūkta* is interpreted by many to present a hierarchical social order, the text inherently supports a unity amongst all peoples that is largely missed in certain interpretations that place certain groups of people over others. This unity of essence is

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<sup>397</sup> Understanding the concept of caste and dharma would necessitate the inclusion of a great number of other texts to examine if they support this commonality that is presented in the texts observed in this study or if they counter this message. It is significant, however, that given the absence of conflicting texts that the message of clear and unifying in the significance of all humans being made from a single source.

supported in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* as well when *Śvetaketu* is taken to various material substances. At these times, it is affirmed over and over to him ‘Thou Art That’. This commonality seems to cross all borders and eliminates the hierarchy that so often permeates human societies.

In the Biblical texts, humans are given a higher responsibility than the other created objects and beings. Humans are specifically commanded to have dominion over the rest of creation. They are given responsibility for creation and are the only portion of the created universe that are created in God’s image. They are a reflection of him and in imitation of his ruling over the universe, they are given the calling to rule over the earth and its creatures. Just as God rules with care and compassion (he provided food and sustenance to all living creatures) so to are humans to rule with care and compassion. This apparent hierarchy however, is countered by an explicit awareness of the commonality of the creation. Humans were not made *ex-nihilo*. Humans come from the ground and to it they will return (Gen 3:19). They are called to care for creation, not rule over it as a king without responsibility. Therefore, the honored role that humans are given in the created world is not meant to give freedom for abuse or mistreatment.

### **Right Knowledge / Desired Death**

In each of the textual groupings, there is an observance that a certain knowledge needs to be ascertained before death in order to achieve the desired outcome at the time of death. This is highlighted in the last texts examined in each section, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in the Vedas (Ch VI.16) and Colossians in the Bible.

In the Vedic texts, the most pertinent example is found in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. The main focus of the text is centered on bringing *Śvetaketu* to the right knowledge of *tat tvam asi*. This knowledge is the awareness of and acknowledgement of

the unity of existence between *Śvetaketu*, the universe, and Existence Itself. Upon awareness of this knowledge, the person will then be united again with the Supreme Being, be it Existence or Brahman (depending on a literal reading or a philosophical reading) and will not have a new manifestation in the world. Otherwise, without coming to this knowledge, the individual will transmigrate into a new earthly existence.

In the Biblical text, the right knowledge is again emphasized in one particular text. The Colossians passage highlights Christ's redemption and recreation of all creation by reconciling all things to himself through his shed blood. The details of Christ's sacrifice that made possible the redemption of the world are found mostly in other texts,<sup>398</sup> but the result of his work is clear in Colossians in the text exegeted and in the remainder of that chapter. Christ made whole that which had been separated. The understanding of this knowledge is the counterpart to the freeing knowledge of the Vedic texts.

Both systems acknowledge that there is something out of synch about the current state of existence in the universe. Both systems offer a way out. There are several important differences however. The first difference addresses the dissimilarity between the use of sacrifice in the two textual compilations. In the Vedic texts, sacrifice, at least according to *Puruṣa* text, is what initially created the world. The Sacrifice caused the *Puruṣa* man to be dismembered and disbursed. He was killed and disseminated. Later the gods put him back together again, but his original bodily dismemberment was essential for the creation of the world. The Supreme Being was willing to expend himself for the sake of creation. In the Biblical texts, this same expending is apparent but Jesus, when

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<sup>398</sup> The four gospels describe the life of Christ and his death on the cross. Other texts include Rom 8:1-3, 10:8-10; 1 Cor 1, Gal 3:13, 6:14.

sacrificed for creation, was not sacrificing in order to create it, he was broken and abused in order to pay for the wrong doing the Adam and Eve. Colossians states that all things were reconciled through his blood; that is the blood of his body. Christ was present in the initial creation and his sacrifice produced a recreation, not in a new body for creation, but in renewed relationships between God and creation. Christ made an eternal reconciliation possible.

Second, it is important to note that in the Vedic texts, the absence of right knowledge escorts one back on the cyclical pattern of existence: manifestation, death, transmigration, manifestation, etc... Without right knowledge, one cannot find rest from this cycle. In the Biblical texts, there is no indication that there is another life on this earth. Death entered the world as a result of the disobedience of Adam and Eve (Gen 3), and although death does not eliminate one's existence, the next stage does not take one back through another earthly life.<sup>399</sup> The texts examined in the Vedas support a cyclical process that continues as long as there is not right knowledge where as the biblical texts give no such indication.

The significant difference in right knowledge is paradigmatic because it also affects the concept of 'salvation' or release between the two thoughts systems. In the Vedic texts a person with right knowledge merges back into Existence thereby losing one's individual existence. The release is a release from separateness. This means that in the state of rest, one is unidentifiable from the Supreme Being. In the Biblical texts, individuals never merge in the same manner as in the Vedas. Salvation, or release,

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<sup>399</sup> For readers unfamiliar with this concept, the verses following the exegeted portion in Colossians, which can be found in the Appendix, reference the mystery of Christ that reconciles the fallen creation with its creator. See Col 1:20-29.

releases one from this fallen world, but nowhere in the text is it ever supported that the bare essence of the creation is of the same substance of the creator. God did not create the world out from his own body and therefore the soul, upon its death, does not return to something from which it did nor originate. By creating out of either *ex-nihilo* or from out of the ground, the God of the Bible eliminates this re-emerging of the creation in himself. It didn't come forth from his own substance, and therefore does not return to it.

Of all the differences found between the Vedic and Biblical conceptions of creation, the concepts noted in this section starkly distinguish these two views from each other. There are many commonalities that have been noted, but the commonalities cannot be viewed alone. At the end of one's earthly existence, the crucial next step and the ramifications of that next step are vastly different depending on whether one's existence will merge with the ultimate or be transmigrated, or whether one will enter into the next stage, while retaining one's identity. This is a major point of interest that captures our attention.

### **Mutual Interchange and Continued Investigation**

In reflecting on the Vedic and Biblical texts, it is worth noting the ways in which the worldviews might affect each other's understanding of one's own text in positive ways. The first and most prominent example that has come to my attention is the unified connectedness of creation found in both worldviews. Although there is significant difference between the meaning of the interconnectivity, the presence of this concept in both the Vedic the Biblical texts can powerfully serve to strengthen each one's commitment to working towards better care of the creation and fighting against the ills of injustice against fellow humans and animals. The material interconnectivity found in the Vedas, although not congruent in the Bible, does have potential to instigate the Biblical

thinker to better understand and more fully utilize the concept of human equality found in the scriptures as well as the importance of ruling over the rest of creation with compassion and care. This heightened awareness has the potential to move Biblical and Vedic thinkers towards a more unified effort to find peace and mutual concern in the world as we all exist together and together exist with the created animals and inanimate objects. Although Revelation 4 was not specifically exegeted in this study, it is a great biblical example of the unity of all creation giving glory to God. The text reads: “In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come.” Note that the four creatures resemble a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. All four creatures, man included, share the honor of giving glory to God at this throne. The interconnectedness of God creation is visually evident in this vision and its meaning.

Furthermore, it is worth a moment before closing the project, to reflect on the deeper meanings of creation myths, not only for the Vedic and Biblical purposes, but rather for adherents of beliefs systems throughout the globe. It was stated in the introduction that creation myths are considered sacred amongst various cultures throughout the world. Although other myths exist in these peoples groups, the creation myth often stands apart and is held in specific high esteem. As I have noted throughout this study, the two creation stories that have been extracted from the Vedic and Biblical



texts are significant in describing the creator it/himself as well as the creator's relationship to the creation. It is worth considering whether all these myths actually describe the same creator, just from different angles and understandings. They certainly all describe the fallen creation and the apparent distance between creation and the creator though the myths give different reasons for this distance. In the Biblical story, the creator himself provides a solution. Would it be possible to ascertain whether, beneath all these stories, lies the one ultimate creator God who is described in different ways in order to speak to the people of the culture in a specific way that can be understood? Many of the Vedic texts that were examined leave room for the possibility of one ultimate God, even though many gods are referenced in the texts. In the African Traditional Religion, many gods and ancestors are mentioned in their creation myths, but there is a clear acknowledgement of an ultimate being. An opportunity for further scholarship might lead one deep into these myths and their beliefs systems to examine more thoroughly the commonalities within them. Perhaps there is more in common between the various people groups of the earth than is currently known. Perhaps diving back into the study of their creation myths will be an integral key in moving towards a more unified humanity that reflects the interconnectivity of the universe that the Vedas and the Bible have made so clear in this study. May this be the beginning of a deep and significant journey into the history and beliefs of the peoples of the world.

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## Appendix

### *R̥g-Veda X.129*<sup>400</sup>

#### *Nāsadīya Sūkta*

- 1 At first was neither Being nor Nonbeing  
There was not air nor yet sky beyond.  
What was its wrapping? Where? In whose protection?  
Was Water there, unfathomable and deep?
- 2 There was no death then, nor yet deathlessness  
of night or day there was not any sign.  
The One breathed without breath, by its own impulse  
Other than that was nothing else at all.
3. Darkness was there, all wrapped around by darkness,  
and all was Water indiscriminate. Then  
that which was hidden by the Void, that One, emerging  
stirring, through power of Ardor, came to be.
- 4 In the beginning Love arose,  
which was the primal germ cell of the mind.  
The seers, searching in their hearts with wisdom,  
Discovered the connection of Being in Nonbeing.
- 5 A crosswise line cut Being from Nonbeing.  
What was described above it, what below?  
Bearers of seed there were and mighty forces,  
Thrust from below and forward move above.
- 6 Who really knows? Who can presume to tell it?  
Whence was it born? Whence issued this creation?  
Even the Gods came after its emergence.  
Then who can tell from whence it came to be?
- 7 That out of which creation has arisen,  
whether it held it firm or it did not,  
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,  
He surely knows – or maybe He does not!

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<sup>400</sup> Panikkar, 58.

**Rg Veda X.121<sup>401</sup>**  
**The *Hiranyagarbha***

1. In the beginning around the Golden Germ:  
he was, as soon as born, the Lord of Being,  
sustainer of the Earth and of this Heaven.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
2. He who bestows life-force and hardy vigor,  
whose ordinances even the Gods obey,  
whose shadow is immortal life – and death –  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
3. Who by his grandeur has emerged sole sovereign  
of every living thing that breathes and slumbers,  
he who is Lord of man and four-legged creatures –  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
4. To him of right belong, by his own power,  
the snow-clad mountains, the world-stream, and the sea.  
His arms are the four quarters of the sky.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
5. Who held secure the mighty Heavens and Earth,  
who established light and sky's vast vault above,  
who measured out the ether in mid-spheres –  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
6. Toward him, trembling, the embattled forces,  
riveted by his glory, direct their gaze.  
Through him the risen sun sheds forth its light.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
7. When came the mighty Waters, bringing with them  
the universal Germ, whence sprang the Fire,  
thence leapt the God's One-Spirit into being.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
8. This One who in his might surveyed the Waters  
pregnant with vital forces, producing sacrifice,  
he is the God of Gods and none beside him.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 71-72.

9. O Father of Earth, by fixed laws ruling,  
O Father of the Heavens, pray protect us,  
O Father of the great and shining Waters!  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
10. O Lord of creatures, Father of all beings,  
you alone pervade all that has come to birth  
Grant us our heart's desire for which we pray.  
May we become the lords of many treasures!

**R̥g-Veda X.90<sup>402</sup>**  
***Puruṣa Sūkta***

1. A Thousand-headed is the Man  
with a thousand eyes, a thousand feet;  
encompassing the Earth all sides,  
he extended it by the fingers' breath.
2. The Man, indeed, is this All,  
what has been and what is to be,  
the Lord of the immortal spheres  
which he surpasses by consuming food.
3. Such is the measure of his might,  
and greater still than this is Man.  
All beings are a fourth of him,  
Three fourths are the immortal in heaven.
4. Three fourths of Man ascended high,  
one fourth took birth again down here.  
From this he spread in all directions  
Into animate and inanimate things.
5. From him the Shining one was born;  
from this Shining one Man again took birth.  
As soon as born, he extended himself  
all over the earth both behind and before.
6. Using the Man as their oblation,  
the Gods performed the sacrifice.  
Spring served them for the clarified butter,  
Summer for the furl, and Autumn for the offering.

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid., 75-76.

7. This evolved Man, then first born,  
they besprinkled on the sacred grass.  
With him the Gods' performed the sacrifice,  
as did also the heavenly beings and seers.
8. From the sacrifice, fully accomplished,  
were born the hymns and the melodies;  
from this were born the various meters;  
from this were born the sacrificial formulas.
9. From the sacrifice, fully accomplished,  
were born the hymns and the melodies;  
from this were born the various meters;  
from this were born the sacrificial formulas.
10. From this were horses born, all creatures  
such as have teeth in either jaw;  
from this were born the breeds of cattle;  
from this were born sheep and goats.
11. When they divided up the Man,  
into how many parts did they divide him?  
What did his mouth become: What his arms?  
What are his legs called? What are his feet?
12. His mouth became the Brahmin; his arms  
became the warrior-prince, his legs  
the common man who plies his trade.  
The lowly serf was born from his feet.
13. The moon was born from his mind; the Sun  
came into being from his eye;  
from his mouth came Indra and Agni,  
while from his breath the Wind was born.
14. From his navel issued the Air;  
from his head unfurled the Sky,  
the Earth from his feet, from his ear the four directions.  
Thus have the worlds been organized.
15. Seven were the sticks of the enclosure,  
thrice seven the fuel sticks were made,  
when the Gods, performing the sacrifice,  
bound the Man as the victim.

16. With the sacrifice the Gods sacrificed to the sacrifice.  
Those were the first established rites.  
These powers ascended up to heaven  
Where dwell the ancient Gods and other beings.

**R̥g-Veda X.61.5-7<sup>403</sup>**  
**Vedic Incest**

As his phallus was stretched out in eagerness for the act of a man, the manly one pulled back. He drew back again from the maiden, his daughter, that tireless phallus which had been thrust in. As they were in the midst of the very act of union, when the father was satisfying his desire for the young girl, the two of them left a little of the out-flowing seed shed upon the back of the earth in the womb of good deeds. When the father shed his seed in his own daughter, he spilt his seed on the earth as he united with her. The benevolent gods created sacred speech and fashioned Rudra Vāstoṣpati, the protector of sacred rites ... As Agni made the seed for the great father, heaven, he entered into the womb, having noticed that she was inclined to him. The hunter shot an arrow at him boldly. The god satisfied his lust in his own daughter ... As the heat of passion came to the king for his enjoyment, heaven laid aside on the ground the bright seed that had been spilt. Agni caused to be born the blameless benevolent group of youths and made them great ... Heaven is my father, the engenderer the navel here. My mother is the wide earth, my close kin. Between these two outstretched bowls is the womb; in it the father placed his daughter's embryo.

**Artharva-Veda X.7<sup>404</sup>**  
**Skambha**

- 1 Which of his members is the seat of Fervor:  
Which is the base of Ceremonial Order?  
Where in him standeth Faith? Where Holy Duty? Where, in  
what part of him is truth implanted?
- 2 Out of which member glows the light of Agni?  
From which proceeds the breath of Mātariśvan?  
From which doth Chandra measure out his journey,  
traveling over Skambha's mighty body?
- 3 Which of his members is the earth's upholder?  
Which gives the middle air a base to rest on?  
Where, in which member is the sky established?

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<sup>403</sup> O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, 26.

<sup>404</sup> Ralph T. H. Griffith, *Hymns of the Atharvaveda: Translated with Popular Commentary* (New Delhi: M. Manoharlal, 1985), 21-25. Cited 23 March 2011 Online: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/av/av10007.htm>.

Where hath the space above the sky its dwelling?

- 4     Whitherward yearning blazeth Agni upward?  
      Whitherward yearning bloweth Mātarisvan?  
      Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha to whom  
      with longing go the turning pathways?
- 5     Whitheward go the half-months, and, accordant with the full  
      year, the months in their procession?
- Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
      to whom go seasons and the groups of seasons?
- 6     Whitherward yearning speed the two young Damsels, accordant,  
      Day and Night, of different color?  
      Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
      to whom the Waters take their way with longing?
- 7     Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
      On whom Prajāpati set up and firmly established all the worlds?
- 8     That universe which Prajāpati created, wearing all forms,  
      the highest, midmost, lowest,  
      How far did Skambha penetrate within it?  
      What portion did he leave unpenetrated?
- 9     How far within the past hath Skambha entered?  
      How much of him hath reached into the future?  
      That one part which he set in thousand places,  
      how far did Skambha penetrate within it?
- 10    Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
      in whom men recognize the Waters, Brahma,  
      In whom they know the worlds and their enclosures,  
      in whom are non-existence and existence?
- 11    Declare that. Skambha, who is he of many,  
      In whom, exerting every power,  
      Fervour maintains her loftiest vow;  
      In whom are comprehended Law, Waters, Devotion and Belief
- 12    Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
      On whom as their foundation earth and  
      firmament and sky are set;  
      In whom as their appointed place rest Fire and Moon  
      and Sun and Wind?

- 13 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
He in whose body are contained all three-and-thirty Deities?
- 14 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha.  
In whom the Sages earliest born, the Richas, Sāman, Yajus,  
Earth, and the one highest Sage abide?
- 15 Who out of many, tell me, is the Skambha.  
Who comprehendeth, for mankind, both immortality and death,  
He who containeth for mankind the gathered  
waters as his veins?
- 16 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
He whose chief arteries stand there, the sky's four regions,  
he irk whom Sacrifice putteth forth its might?
- 17 They who in Purusha understand Brahma know  
Him who is Supreme.  
He who knows Him who is Supreme,  
and he who knows the Lord of Life,  
These know the loftiest Power Divine,  
and thence know Skambha thoroughly.
- 18 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
Of whom Vaisvānara became the head,  
the Angirases his eye, and Yātus his corporeal parts?
- 19 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
Whose mouth they say is Holy Lore, his tongue the Honey-  
sweetened Whip, his udder is Virāj, they say?
- 20 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
From whom they hewed the lichas off,  
from whom they chipped the Yajus, he  
Whose hairs are Sāma-verses  
and his mouth the Atharvāngirases?
- 21 Men count as 'twere a thing  
supreme nonentity's conspicuous branch;  
And lower man who serve thy branch regard it as an entity.
- 22 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
In whom Ādityas dwell,  
in whom Rudras and Vasus are contained,  
In whom the future and the past

- and all the worlds are firmly set;
- 23     Whose secret treasure evermore  
        the three-and thirty Gods protect?  
        Who knoweth now the treasure which,  
        O Deities ye watch and guard?
- 24     Where the Gods, versed in Sacred Lore,  
        worship the loftiest Power Divine  
        The priest who knows them face to face  
        may be a sage who knows the truth.
- 25     Great, verily, are those Gods who sprang  
        from non-existence into life.  
        Further, men say that that one part of Skambha is nonentity.
- 26     Where Skambha generating gave  
        the Ancient World its shape and form,  
        They recognized that single part of Skambha  
        as the Ancient World,
- 27     The three-and-thirty Gods within his body  
        were disposed as limbs:  
        Some, deeply versed in Holy Lore,  
        some know those three-and-thirty Gods.
- 28     Men know Hiranyagarbha as supreme and inexpressible:  
        In the beginning, in the midst of the world,  
        Skambha poured that gold.
- 29     On Skambha Fervour rests,  
        the worlds and Holy Law repose on him.  
        Skambha, I clearly know that all of thee on Indra is imposed.
- 30     On Indra Fervour rests, on him  
        the worlds and Holy Law recline.  
        Indra, I clearly know that all of thee on Skambha findeth rest.
- 31     Ere sun and dawn man calls and calls one Deity  
        by the other's name.  
        When the Unborn first sprang into existence he reached that  
        independent sovereign lordship;  
        than which aught higher never hath arisen.
- 32     Be reverence paid to him, that highest Brahma, whose base is  
        Earth, his belly Air, who made the sky to be his head.



- 33      Homage to highest Brahma, him whose eye is Sūrya and the  
Moon who groweth young and new again, him who made  
Agni for his mouth.
- 34      Homage to highest Brahma, him whose two  
life-breathings were the Wind,  
The Angirases his sight: who made the  
regions be his means of sense.
- 35      Skambha set fast these two, the earth and heaven,  
Skambha maintained the ample air between them.  
Skambha established the six spacious regions: this whole world  
Skambha entered and pervaded.
- 36      Homage to highest Brahma, him who,  
sprung from Fervour and from toil,  
Filled all the worlds completely,  
who made Soma for himself alone.
- 37      Why doth the Wind move ceaselessly?  
Why doth the spirit take no rest?  
Why do the Waters, seeking truth, never at any time repose?
- 38      Absorbed in Fervour, is the mighty Being,  
in the world's centre, on the waters' surface.  
To him the Deities, one and all betake them.  
So stand the tree trunk with the branches round it.
- 39      Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha.  
To whom the Deities with hands, with feet,  
and voice, and ear, and eye.  
Present unmeasured tribute in the measured hall of sacrifice?
- 40      Darkness is chased away from him:  
he is exempt from all distress.  
In him are all the lights, the three abiding in Prajāpati.
- 41      He verily who knows the Reed of Gold  
that stands amid the flood, is the mysterious Lord of Life.
- 42      Singly the two young Maids of different colours  
approach the six-pegged warp in turns and weave it.  
The one draws out the threads, the other lays them:  
they break them not, they reach no end of labour.

- 43      Of these two, dancing round as 'twere,  
I cannot distinguish whether ranks before the other.  
A Male in weaves this web, a Male divides it:  
a Male hath stretched it to the cope of heaven
- 44      These pegs have buttressed up the sky.  
The Sāmāns have turned them into shuttles for the weaving.

## Chāndogya Upaniṣhad <sup>405</sup>

### Part Six

#### Chapter I — The Non—Duality of the Self

1. Om. There once lived Svetaketu the grandson of Aruna. To him his father said:  
"Svetaketu, lead the life of a brahmacharin; for there is none belonging to our family, my dear, who, not having studied the Vedas, is a brahmin only by birth."

2—3. Svetaketu went to his teacher's house when he was twelve years old and studied the Vedas till he was twenty—four. Then he returned to his father, serious, considering himself well read and arrogant. His father said to him: "Svetaketu, since you are now so serious, think yourself well read and are so arrogant, have you, my dear, ever asked for that instruction by which one hears what cannot be heard, by which one perceives what cannot be perceived, by which one knows what cannot be known?" Svetaketu asked: "What is that instruction, venerable Sir?"

4—6. "Just as, my dear, by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the truth is that all is clay; "Just as, my dear, by one nugget of gold all that is made of gold is known, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the truth is that all is gold; "And just as, my dear, by one pair of nail—scissors all that is made of iron is known, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the truth is that all is iron—even so, my dear, is that instruction."

7. "Surely those venerable men did not know that. For if they had known it, why should they not have told it to me? Therefore do you, venerable Sir, tell me about it." "So be it, my dear," said the father.

#### Chapter II — Brahman: the Cause of the Universe

1. "In the beginning, my dear, this universe was Being (Sat) alone, one only without a second. Some say that in the beginning this was non—being (asat) alone, one only without a second; and from that non—being, being was born."

2. Aruni said: "But how, indeed, could it be thus, my dear? How could Being be born

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<sup>405</sup> Nikhilananda, *Online*.

from non—being? No, my dear, it was Being alone that existed in the beginning, one only without a second.

3. "It (Being, or Brahman) thought: 'May I be many; may I grow forth.' It created fire. That fire thought: 'May I be many; may I grow forth.' It created water. That is why, whenever a person is hot and perspires, water is produced from fire (heat) alone.

4. "That water thought: 'May I be many; may I grow forth.' It created food (i.e. earth). That is why, whenever it rains anywhere, abundant food is produced. From water alone is edible food produced.

### **Chapter III — The Threefold Development**

1. "Of all these living beings, there are only three origins: those born from an egg, those born from a living being and those born from a sprout.

2. "That Deity thought: 'Let Me now enter into those three deities by means of this living self and let Me then develop names and forms.'

3. "That Deity, having thought: 'Let Me make each of these three tripartite,' entered into these three deities by means of the living self and developed names and forms.

4. "It made each of these tripartite; and how these three deities became, each of them, tripartite, that learn from me now, my dear.

### **Chapter IV — The Threefold Development further explained**

1. "The red colour of gross fire is the colour of the original fire; the white colour of gross fire is the colour of the original water; the black colour of gross fire is the colour of the original earth. Thus vanishes from fire what is commonly called fire, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the three colours (forms) alone are true.

2. "The red colour of the sun is the colour of fire, the white the colour of water, the black the colour of earth. Thus vanishes from the sun what is commonly called the sun, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the three colours alone are true.

3. "The red colour of the moon is the colour of fire, the white the colour of water, the black the colour of earth. Thus vanishes from the moon what is commonly called the moon, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the three colours alone are true.

4. "The red colour of lightning is the colour of fire, the white the colour of water, the black the colour of earth. Thus vanishes from lightning what is commonly called lightning, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the three colours alone are true.

5. "It was just through this knowledge that the great householders and great Vedic

scholars of olden times declared: 'No one can now mention to us anything which we have not heard, thought of, or known.' They knew all from these three forms.

6—7. "Whatever, appeared red they knew to be the colour of fire; whatever appeared white they knew to be the colour of water; whatever appeared black they knew to be the colour of earth. "Whatever appeared to be unknown they knew to be the combination of these three deities (i.e. colours). Now learn from me, my dear, how these three deities, when they reach man, become each of them tripartite.

### **Chapter V — The Threefold Nature of Food**

1. "Food when eaten becomes threefold. What is coarsest in it becomes faeces, what is medium becomes flesh and what is subtlest becomes mind.
2. "Water when drunk becomes threefold. What is coarsest in it becomes urine, what is medium becomes blood and what is subtlest becomes prana.
3. "Fire when eaten becomes threefold. What is coarsest in it becomes bone, what is medium becomes marrow and what is subtlest becomes speech.
4. "The mind, my dear, consists of food, the prana of water and speech of heat." "Please, venerable Sir, instruct me further." "So be it, my dear."

### **Chapter VI — The Physical Nature of the Mind, the Prana and Speech**

1. "That, my dear, which is the subtlest part of curds rises, when they are churned and becomes butter.
2. "In the same manner, my dear, that which is the subtlest part of the food that is eaten rises and becomes mind.
3. "The subtlest part of the water that is drunk rises and becomes prana.
4. "The subtlest part of the fire that is eaten rises and becomes speech.
5. "Thus, my dear, the mind consists of food, the prana consists of water and speech consists of fire." "Please, venerable Sir, instruct me further." "So be it, my dear."

### **Chapter VII — How the Mind consists of Food**

1. "A person, my dear, consists of sixteen parts. Do not eat any food for fifteen days, but drink as much water as you like. Since the prana consists of water, it will not be cut off if you drink water."
2. Svetaketu did not eat any food for fifteen days. Then he came to his father and said: "What, Sir, shall I recite?" His father said: "The Rik, Yagus and Saman verses." He replied: "They do not occur to me, Sir."

3. His father said to him: "Just as, my dear, of a great blazing fire a single coal, the size of a firefly, may be left, which would not burn much more than that, even so, my dear, of your sixteen parts only one part is left; and therefore with that one part you do not remember the Vedas. Now go and eat and you will understand me."

4. Svetaketu ate and approached his father. Then whatever his father asked him, he showed that he knew it.

5—6. Then his father said to him: "Just as, my dear, of a great lighted fire a single coal the size of a firefly, if left, may be made to blaze up again by adding grass to it and will thus burn much more, "Even so, my dear; of your sixteen parts only one part was left and that, when strengthened by food, blazed up. With it you now remember the Vedas. Therefore, my dear, the mind consists of food, the prana consists of water and speech consists of fire." After that he understood what his father said, yea, he understood it.

### **Chapter VIII — Concerning Sleep, Hunger, Thirst and Death**

1. Uddalaka the son of Aruna said to his son Svetaketu: "Learn from me, my dear, the true nature of sleep. When a person has entered into deep sleep, as it is called, then, my dear, he becomes united with Pure Being (Sat), he has gone to his own Self. That is why they say he is in deep sleep (svapiti); it is because he has gone (apita) to his own (svam).

2. "Just as a bird tied by a string to the hand of the bird—catcher first flies in every direction and then finding no rest anywhere, settles down at the place where it is bound, so also the mind (i.e. the individual soul reflected in the mind), my dear, after flying in every direction and finding no rest anywhere, settles down in the Prana (i.e. Pure Being); for the mind (the individual soul) is fastened to the Prana (Pure Being).

3. "Learn from me, my dear, what hunger and thirst are. When a man is hungry, as they say, it is water that has led (i.e. carried away) what was eaten. Therefore, just as they speak of a leader of cows, a leader of horses, a leader of men, so do they speak of water as the leader of food. So, my dear, know this offshoot (i.e. the body) to have sprung forth from a cause, for it cannot be without a root.

4. "And where could its root be except in food (earth)? And in the same way, my dear, as food too is an offshoot, seek for water as its root. And as water too, my dear, is an offshoot, seek for fire as its root. And as fire too, my dear, is an offshoot, seek for Being (Sat) as its root. Yes, all these creatures, my dear, have their root in Being, they dwell in Being, they finally rest in Being.

5. "When a man is said to be thirsty, it is fire that has led (i.e. carried away) what was drunk by him. Therefore as they speak of a leader of cows, a leader of horses, a leader of men, so do they speak of fire as the leader of water. So, my dear, know this offshoot (the body) to have sprung forth from a cause, for it cannot be without a root.

6. "And where could its root be except in water? And in the same way, my dear, as water is an offshoot, seek for fire as its root. And as fire too, my dear, is an offshoot, seek for

Being as its root. Yes, my dear, all these creatures have their root in Being, they dwell in Being, they finally rest in Being. "And how these three deities (fire, water and earth), on reaching a human being, become each of them tripartite has already been said. When a person departs hence, his speech merges in his mind, his mind in his prana, his prana in heat (fire) and the heat in the Highest Being.

7. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter IX — The Absence of Individuality in Deep Sleep**

1—2. "As bees, my dear, make honey by collecting the juices of trees located at different places and reduce them to one form, "And as these juices have no discrimination so as to be able to say: 'I am the juice of this tree,' or 'I am the juice of that tree'—even so, indeed, my dear, all these creatures, though they reach Pure Being, do not know that they have reached Pure Being.

3. "Whatever these creatures are, here in this world—a tiger, a lion, a wolf, a boar, a worm, a fly, a gnat, or a mosquito—that they become again.

4. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter X — The Absence of Particularized Consciousness in Deep Sleep**

1—2. "These rivers, my dear, flow—the eastern toward the east and the western toward the west. They arise from the sea and flow into the sea. Just as these rivers, while they are in the sea, do not know: 'I am this river' or 'I am that river,' "Even so, my dear, all these creatures, even though they have come from Pure Being, do not know that they have come from Pure Being. Whatever these creatures are, here in this world—a tiger, a lion, a wolf a boar, a worm, a fly, a gnat, or a mosquito, that they become again.

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XI — The Indestructibility of the Jiva**

1. "If, my dear, someone were to strike at the root of this large tree here, it would bleed but live. If he were to strike at the middle, it would bleed but live. If he were to strike at the top, it would bleed but live. Pervaded by the living self, that tree stands firm, drinking in again and again its nourishment and rejoicing.

2. "But if the life (i.e. living self) leaves one of its branches, that branch withers; if it leaves a second, that branch withers; if it leaves a third, that branch withers. If it leaves the whole tree, the whole three withers.

3. "In exactly the same manner, my dear," said he, "know this: This body dies, bereft of the living self; but the living self dies not. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XII — The Birth of the Gross from the Subtle**

1. "Bring me a fruit of that nyagrodha (banyan) tree." "Here it is' venerable Sir." "Break it." "It is broken, venerable Sir." "What do you see there?" "These seeds, exceedingly small, "Break one of these, my son." "It is broken, venerable Sir." "What do you see there?" "Nothing at all, venerable Sir."

2. The father said: "That subtle essence, my dear, which you do not perceive there—from that very essence this great nyagrodha arises. Believe me, my dear.

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XIII — The Invisibility of an Existent Object**

1. "Place this salt in water and then come to me in the morning." The son did as he was told. The father said to him: "My son, bring me the salt which you placed in the water last night." Looking for it, the son did not find it, for it was completely dissolved.

2. The father said: "My son, take a sip of water from the surface. How is it?" "It is salt." "Take a sip from the middle. How is it?" "It is salt." "Take a sip from the bottom. How is it?" "It is salt." "Throw it away and come to me." The son did as he was told, saying: "The salt was there all the time." Then the father said: "Here also, my dear, in this body you do not perceive Sat (Being); but It is indeed there."

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XIV — The Means of Self—Knowledge**

1. "Just as someone, my dear, might lead a person, with his eyes covered, away from the country of the Gandharas and leave him in a place where there were no human beings; and just as that person would turn toward the east, or the north, or the south, or the west, shouting: 'I have been brought here with my eyes covered, I have been left here with my eyes covered!'

2. "And as thereupon someone might loosen the covering and say to him: 'Gandhara is in that direction; go that way'; and as thereupon, having been informed and being capable of judgement, he would, by asking his way from one village to another, arrive at last at Gandhara—in exactly the same manner does a man who has found a teacher to instruct

him obtain the true knowledge. For him there is delay only so long as he is not liberated from the body; then he reaches perfection.

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son. "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XV — Ultimate Liberation**

1. "Around a dying person afflicted with illness, my dear, his relatives gather and ask: 'Do you know me? Do you know me?' He knows them as long as his speech is not merged in his mind, his mind in his prana (breath), his prana in heat (fire) and the heat in the Highest Deity.

2. "But when his speech is merged in his mind, his mind in his prana, his prana in heat and the heat in the Highest Deity, then he does not know them.

3. "Now, that which is the subtle essence—in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu." "Please, venerable Sir, give me further instruction," said the son "So be it, my dear," the father replied.

### **Chapter XVI — Liberation for the Knower of Brahman**

1. "My dear, they (i.e. the police) bring a man whom they have seized by the hand and say: 'He has taken something, he has committed a theft.' When he denies it, they say: 'Heat the axe for him.' If he has committed the theft but denies it, then he makes himself a liar. Being false—minded, he covers himself with falsehood, grasps the heated axe and is burnt. Then he is killed.

2. "But if he did not commit the theft, then he makes himself what he really is. Being true—minded, he covers himself with truth, grasps the heated axe and is not burnt. He is released.

3. "As that truthful man is not burnt so also one who has known Sat is not born again. Thus in That (Sat) all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu."

WTT Genesis 1:1<sup>406</sup>

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

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<sup>406</sup> All Hebrew text is taken from WTT Version as found in BibleWorks for Windows, Version 6.0, BibleWorks, LLC, 2003.



<sup>2</sup> וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְּהוֹ וּבָהוּ וַחֲשָׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ  
 אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:  
<sup>3</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אוֹר וַיְהי־אוֹר:  
<sup>4</sup> וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר  
 וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ:  
<sup>5</sup> וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאוֹר יוֹם וּלַחֹשֶׁךְ קִרָּא לַיְלָה וַיְהי־עֶרֶב  
 וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד: פ  
<sup>6</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין  
 מַיִם לַמַּיִם:  
<sup>7</sup> וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַרְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת  
 לָרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לָרָקִיעַ וַיְהי־כֵן:  
<sup>8</sup> וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי:  
 פ  
<sup>9</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְווּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד  
 וְתִרְאֶה הַיַּבֵּשָׁה וַיְהי־כֵן:  
<sup>10</sup> וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיַּבֵּשָׁה אֶרֶץ וּלַמָּקוֹה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים  
 וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב:  
<sup>11</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תִּדְשָׂא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזֶּרַע זֶרַע עֵץ  
 פְּרִי עֵשֶׂה פְרִי לַמִּינוֹ אֲשֶׁר זֶרַע־בוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהי־כֵן:  
<sup>12</sup> וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזֶּרַע זֶרַע לַמִּינֵהוּ וְעֵץ  
 עֹשֶׂה־פְרִי אֲשֶׁר זֶרַע־בוּ לַמִּינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב:  
<sup>13</sup> וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי: פ  
<sup>14</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי מְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לַהַבְדִּיל בֵּין  
 הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיוֹמִים וּשְׁנָיִם:  
<sup>15</sup> וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהי־כֵן:  
<sup>16</sup> וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֶת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת־הַמָּאוֹר הַגָּדֹל  
 לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־הַמָּאוֹר הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֵת  
 הַכּוֹכָבִים:  
<sup>17</sup> וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ:  
<sup>18</sup> וּלְמַשֵּׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ  
 וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב:  
<sup>19</sup> וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם רְבִיעִי: פ  
<sup>20</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שָׂרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף  
 עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־פְּנֵי רָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם:

## Genesis 1:1-25<sup>407</sup>

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. <sup>6</sup> And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup> And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. <sup>9</sup> And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. <sup>14</sup> And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> And God made the two great lights- the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night- and the stars. <sup>17</sup> And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. <sup>20</sup> And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." <sup>21</sup> So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. <sup>24</sup> And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds- livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

## Genesis 1:26-30<sup>408</sup>

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ<sup>26</sup>

<sup>407</sup> All English texts are taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted. BibleWorks.

<sup>408</sup> Translation mine.

בְּדִגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ  
וּבְכָל־הַרֹמֵשׁ הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ:  
<sup>27</sup>וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא  
אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:  
<sup>28</sup>וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ  
וּמִלְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשֶׁתָּהּ וּרְדּוּ בְּדִגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם  
וּבְכָל־חַיַּה הַרֹמֶשֶׂת עַל־הָאָרֶץ:  
<sup>29</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל־עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זָרַע  
אֲשֶׁר־עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־בוֹ פְּרִיעַן  
זָרַע זָרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ:  
<sup>30</sup>וּלְכָל־חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וּלְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל־רֹמֵשׁ  
עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־בוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת־כָּל־יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ  
וַיְהִי־כֵן:

<sup>26</sup>And God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens, and over all the earth and over the cattle and over all the creeping things which creep on the earth." <sup>27</sup>So God created mankind in his image, in the image of God, he created him, male and female, he created them. <sup>28</sup>And God blessed them and God said to them, "You bear fruit and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the heavens and over every living creature that moves on the ground." <sup>29</sup>Then God said, "Behold I give to you every seed-sowing plant which is on the face of all the earth and every tree which yields seed-bearing fruit; to you, it is for food. <sup>30</sup>And to every living creature on the earth and to all the birds of the heavens and to every living creature that moves on the ground which in it has a soul of life; all green plants are for food." And it was thus. <sup>31</sup>And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Gen 2: 15-25

## Genesis 2:1 - 25

<sup>1</sup>וַיִּכְלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צָבָאָם:  
<sup>2</sup>וַיִּכְלֵ אֱלֹהִים בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבַּת  
בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:  
<sup>3</sup>וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת  
מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת: פ  
<sup>4</sup>אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וּשְׁמַיִם:  
<sup>5</sup>וְכָל־שִׁיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טָרֶם יִהְיֶה בָאָרֶץ וְכָל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרֶם  
יִצְמַח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם אֵין  
לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה:

<sup>6</sup> וְאֵד יַעֲלֶה מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי־הָאָדָמָה:  
<sup>7</sup> וַיִּצְרֹר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עֹפֶר מִן־הָאָדָמָה וַיִּפְחֵה בְּאִפּוֹ נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:  
<sup>8</sup> וַיִּטֵּעַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גֶּן־עֵדֶן מִקְדָּם וַיִּשֶׂם שֵׁם אֶת־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יִצֹר:  
<sup>9</sup> וַיִּצְמַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאָדָמָה כָּל־עֵץ נָחֵמַד לְמִרְאָה וטוֹב לְמֵאֲכָל וְעֵץ הַחַיִּים בְּתוֹךְ הָגֶן וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע:  
<sup>10</sup> וַנְּהָר יִצָּא מֵעֵדֶן לְהִשְׁקוֹת אֶת־הָגֶן וּמִשָּׁם יִפְרֹד וְהָיָה לְאַרְבָּעָה רָאשִׁים:  
<sup>11</sup> שֵׁם הָאֶחָד פִּישׁוֹן הוּא הַסֹּבֵב אֶת כָּל־אֶרֶץ הַחֲוִילָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם הַזֹּהָב:  
<sup>12</sup> וְהָיָה הָאָרֶץ הַהוּא טוֹב שָׁם הַבָּדֶלֶח וְאֲבֹן הַשֹּׁהַם:  
<sup>13</sup> וְשֵׁם־הַנְּהָר הַשֵּׁנִי גִיחוֹן הוּא הַסֹּבֵב אֶת כָּל־אֶרֶץ כּוּשׁ:  
<sup>14</sup> וְשֵׁם הַנְּהָר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי חִדְקֵל הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ קִדְמַת אַשּׁוּר וְהַנְּהָר הָרְבִיעִי הוּא פָּרָת:  
<sup>15</sup> וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיַּנְחֵהוּ בִּגְן־עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ:  
<sup>16</sup> וַיִּצְוֵה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל־עֵץ הָגֶן אָכַל תֹּאכַל:  
<sup>17</sup> וּמִעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת:  
<sup>18</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא־טוֹב הֵיכָּן הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה־לּוֹ עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ:  
<sup>19</sup> וַיִּצְרֹר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאָדָמָה כָּל־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֶת כָּל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֶל־הָאָדָם לִרְאוֹת מִה־יִּקְרָא־לּוֹ וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא־לּוֹ הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ:  
<sup>20</sup> וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שְׁמוֹת לְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה וּלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּלְאֶדָם לֹא־מָצָא עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ:  
<sup>21</sup> וַיִּפֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים תְּרִדָמָה עַל־הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצִּלְעֹתָיו וַיִּסְגֹּר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתָּנָה:  
<sup>22</sup> וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַצִּלְעַ אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיָּבֵאָהּ אֶל־הָאָדָם:  
<sup>23</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעֵם עֵצָם מִעֲצָמִי וּבָשָׂר מִבָּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לִקְחָהּ־זֹאת:  
<sup>24</sup> עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד:

וַיְהִי־יֹמֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יִתְבַּשְׁשׁוּ׃<sup>25</sup>

<sup>ESV</sup> **Genesis 2:1** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

<sup>4</sup> These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. <sup>5</sup> When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up- for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, <sup>6</sup> and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground <sup>7</sup> then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

<sup>9</sup> And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. <sup>10</sup> A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. <sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." <sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." <sup>19</sup> So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." <sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

**Genesis 3:1** וַתִּהְיֶה הָאִשָּׁה אֵלֶּהִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אַף כִּי־אָמַר אֱלֹהִים

לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל עֵץ הַגֶּן׃

<sup>2</sup> וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־הַנָּחֶשׁ מִפְּרִי עֵץ־הַגֶּן נֹאכָל׃

<sup>3</sup> וּמִפְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ־הַגֶּן אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ׃

מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְעוּ בּוֹ פֶּן־תִּמְתּוּן:  
<sup>4</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחֵשׁ אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה לֹא־מוֹת תָּמוּת:  
<sup>5</sup> כִּי יָדַע אֱלֹהִים כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכַלְכֶּם מִמֶּנּוּ וְנִפְקַחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם  
וְהִייתֶם כַּאֲלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע:  
<sup>6</sup> וַתֵּרָא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמֹאכָל וְכִי תֹאדָה־הוּא  
לְעֵינַיִם וְנִחְמַד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׁכִּיל וַתִּקַּח מִפְּרִיו וַתֹּאכַל וַתֵּתֶן  
גַּם־לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּה וַיֹּאכַל:  
<sup>7</sup> וַתִּפְקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי עִירֻמָּם הֵם וַיִּתְּפְרוּ עֲלֵהָ  
תָאֲנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם חֲגָרֹת:  
<sup>8</sup> וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִתְּהַלֵּךְ בִּגְגֵן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם  
וַיִּתְּחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הָגֵן:  
<sup>9</sup> וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אַיֶּכָּה:  
<sup>10</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־קִלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בִגְגֵן וְאִירָא כִּי־עִירָם אָנֹכִי  
וְאֶחְבֵּא:  
<sup>11</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עִירָם אַתָּה הַמֶּן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר  
צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵבִלְתִּי אֲכַל־מִמֶּנּוּ אֲכַלְתָּ:  
<sup>12</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הוּא נָתַתָּה־לִּי  
מִן־הָעֵץ וַיֹּאכַל:  
<sup>13</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לָאִשָּׁה מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂית וַתֹּאמֶר  
הָאִשָּׁה הַנָּחֵשׁ הִשְׁיֵאֲנִי וַיֹּאכַל:  
<sup>14</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַנָּחֵשׁ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת אֲרוּרָה  
אַתָּה מִכָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִכָּל־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה עַל־גִּחְוֹנְךָ תֵּלֵךְ וְעַפְּרָה  
תֹּאכַל כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:  
<sup>15</sup> וְאִיבָה אִשִּׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זֶרְעֶךָ וּבֵין זֶרְעָהּ  
הוּא יִשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תִּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עֲקֵב: ס  
<sup>16</sup> אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר הָרְבָּה אֲרֻבָּה עֲצָבוֹנְךָ וְהִרְנֶךָ בַּעֲצָב  
תֵּלְדִי בָנִים וְאֶל־אִישְׁךָ תִּשְׁוָקְתִּי וְהוּא יִמְשַׁלְּבֶךָ: ס  
<sup>17</sup> וְלָאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתְּךָ וַתֹּאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ  
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה הָאָדָמָה  
בַּעֲבוּרְךָ בַּעֲצָבוֹן תֹּאכַלְנָה כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:  
<sup>18</sup> וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדַּר תַּצְמִיחַ לְךָ וְאֲכַלְתָּ אֶת־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה:  
<sup>19</sup> בְּזַעַת אִפִּיד תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם עַד שׁוֹבֶכָה אֶל־הָאָדָמָה כִּי  
מִמֶּנָּה לִקְחָתָה כִּי־עַפְּרָה אַתָּה וְאֶל־עַפְּרָה תִּשׁוּב:  
<sup>20</sup> וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ חַוָּה כִּי הוּא הִיְתָה אִם כָּל־חַי:  
<sup>21</sup> וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לָאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ עֹר וַיִּלְבָּשֵׁם: פ

<sup>22</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה כְּאֶחָד מִזֶּהוּ לְרֵעֵת  
טוֹב וְרָע וְעַתָּה פְּרִי־שֵׁלַח יָדוֹ וְלָקַח גַּם מֵעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאָכַל  
וְחָי לְעֹלָם:  
<sup>23</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר  
לָקַח מִשָּׁם:  
<sup>24</sup> וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁכֹּן מִקְדָּם לְגִן־עֵדֶן אֶת־הַכְּרָבִים וְאֵת  
לֶהֱטֵה הַחֶרֶב הַמַּתְהַפֶּכֶת לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים: ס

ESV **Genesis 3:1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" <sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. <sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." <sup>11</sup> He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." <sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup> The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." <sup>16</sup> To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." <sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." <sup>20</sup> The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. <sup>21</sup> And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his

hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever-" <sup>23</sup> therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

# **Psalm 8:1-9**

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. <sup>2</sup> Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. <sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? <sup>5</sup> Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup> You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, <sup>7</sup> all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, <sup>8</sup> the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. <sup>9</sup> O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

## **Psalm 8:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> יְהוָה אֱדֹנֵינוּ מִה־אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תָּנָה הוֹדְךָ  
עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם:  
<sup>2</sup> מִפִּי עוֹלָלִים וַיִּנָּקִים יִסְדֹּתַי עֵז לְמַעַן צוּרֶיךָ לְהַשְׁבִּית  
אֹיֵב וּמִתְנַקֵּם:  
<sup>3</sup> כִּי־אֲרָאָה שְׁמִיךָ מַעֲשֵׂי אֲצַבְעֶיךָ יָרַח וְכּוֹכָבִים אֲשֶׁר  
כּוֹנְנָתָה:  
<sup>4</sup> מִה־אֲנוּשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֵנוּ וּבֶן־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקֹדֵנוּ:  
<sup>5</sup> וּתְחַסְּרֵהוּ מִעֵט מַאֲלָהִים וּכְבוֹד וְהָדָר תַּעֲטֶרֶהוּ:  
<sup>6</sup> תִּמְשִׁילֵהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ כָּל שְׁתֵּה תַּחַת־רַגְלָיו:  
<sup>7</sup> צָנָה וְאַלְפִים כָּלָם וְגַם בַּהֲמוֹת שָׂדֵי:  
<sup>8</sup> צִפּוֹר שָׁמַיִם וְדָגֵי הַיָּם עֹבֵר אַרְחוֹת יָמִים:  
<sup>9</sup> יְהוָה אֱדֹנֵינוּ מִה־אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ:

**Psalm 33:1-22** Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. <sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! <sup>3</sup> Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts. <sup>4</sup> For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. <sup>5</sup> He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. <sup>7</sup> He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. <sup>8</sup> Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! <sup>9</sup> For he spoke, and it



came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. <sup>10</sup> The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. <sup>11</sup> The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. <sup>12</sup> Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! <sup>13</sup> The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; <sup>14</sup> from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, <sup>15</sup> he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds. <sup>16</sup> The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. <sup>17</sup> The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue. <sup>18</sup> Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, <sup>19</sup> that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine. <sup>20</sup> Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. <sup>21</sup> For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. <sup>22</sup> Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

# **Psalm 33:1-22**

WTT Psalm 33:1  
<sup>1</sup> רָנְנוּ צְדִיקִים בַּיהוָה לְיִשְׁרָאֵל נְאוּה תְהִלָּה:  
<sup>2</sup> הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה בְּכִנּוֹר בְּנֶבֶל עֲשׂוּר זָמְרוּ-לוֹ:  
<sup>3</sup> שִׁירוּ-לוֹ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ הִיטִיבוּ נֶגֶן בְּתִרְעָה:  
<sup>4</sup> כִּי-יִשְׂרָאֵל דִּבֶּר-יְהוָה וְכָל-מַעֲשָׂהוּ בְּאִמוּנָה:  
<sup>5</sup> אֲהֵב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט חֶסֶד יְהוָה מְלֵאכָה הָאָרֶץ:  
<sup>6</sup> בְּדַבֵּר יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נִעֲשׂוּ וּבְרוּחַ פִּיו כָּל-צִבְאָם:  
<sup>7</sup> בְּנֶס כִּנּוֹר מִי הַיָּם נָתַן בְּאַצְרוֹת תְּהוֹמוֹת:  
<sup>8</sup> יִירָאוּ מִיְהוָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ מִמֶּנּוּ יִגּוּרוּ כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל:  
<sup>9</sup> כִּי הוּא אָמַר וַיְהִי הוּא-צִוָּה וַיַּעֲמֹד:  
<sup>10</sup> יְהוָה הַפִּיר עֲצַת-גּוֹיִם הִנִּיא מַחֲשָׁבוֹת עַמִּים:  
<sup>11</sup> עֲצַת יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תַּעֲמֹד מַחֲשָׁבוֹת לִבּוֹ לְדֹר וָדֹר:  
<sup>12</sup> אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵי הָעָם בָּחַר לִנְחֻלָּה לּוֹ:  
<sup>13</sup> מִשְׁמַיִם הִבִּיט יְהוָה רָאָה אֶת-כָּל-בְּנֵי הָאָדָם:  
<sup>14</sup> מִמִּכּוֹן-שִׁבְתּוֹ הִשְׁגִּיחַ אֶל כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:  
<sup>15</sup> הִיצֵר יָחַד לִבָּם הִמְבִּין אֶל-כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם:  
<sup>16</sup> אֵין-הֶמְלֵךְ נוֹשָׁע בְּרֶב-חֵיל גָּבוּר לֹא-יִנָּצֵל בְּרֶב-כֹּחַ:  
<sup>17</sup> שֶׁקֶר הַסּוֹס לְתִשׁוּעָה וּבֶרֶב חֵילוֹ לֹא יִמְלֹט:  
<sup>18</sup> הִנֵּה עֵין יְהוָה אֶל-יִרְאָיו לְמוֹחֲלִים לְחֹסְדּוֹ:  
<sup>19</sup> לְהַצִּיל מִמּוֹת נַפְשָׁם וּלְחַיּוֹתָם בְּרַעֲב:  
<sup>20</sup> נִפְשָׁנוּ חֲכָתָה לַיהוָה עֲזָרְנוּ וּמִגִּנָּנוּ הוּא:  
<sup>21</sup> כִּי-יִבּוּ יִשְׁמַח לִבָּנוּ כִּי בִשְׁם קִדְשׁוֹ בִּטְחָנוּ:  
<sup>22</sup> יְהִי-חֶסֶדְךָ יְהוָה עֲלֵינוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר יִחְלָנוּ לָךְ:

**Psalm 104:1-35** Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, <sup>2</sup> covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. <sup>3</sup> He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; <sup>4</sup> he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire. <sup>5</sup> He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. <sup>6</sup> You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. <sup>7</sup> At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. <sup>8</sup> The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. <sup>9</sup> You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. <sup>10</sup> You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; <sup>11</sup> they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. <sup>12</sup> Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches. <sup>13</sup> From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. <sup>14</sup> You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth <sup>15</sup> and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart. <sup>16</sup> The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. <sup>17</sup> In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. <sup>18</sup> The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers. <sup>19</sup> He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. <sup>20</sup> You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about. <sup>21</sup> The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. <sup>22</sup> When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens. <sup>23</sup> Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. <sup>24</sup> O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. <sup>25</sup> Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. <sup>26</sup> There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it. <sup>27</sup> These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. <sup>28</sup> When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. <sup>29</sup> When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. <sup>30</sup> When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. <sup>31</sup> May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works, <sup>32</sup> who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! <sup>33</sup> I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. <sup>34</sup> May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. <sup>35</sup> Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!

**Psalm 104:1-18**

WTT Psalm 104:1  
 בָּרַכְי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי נִדְלָתָא  
 מְאֹד הוֹד וְהָדָר לְבָשֶׁתָּ:  
 עֲטָה־אוֹר כְּשֶׁלֶמָה נוֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּירִיעָה:  
 הַמִּקְרָה בָּמִים עֲלִיּוֹתָיו הַשֶּׁם־עֲבִים רְכוּבוֹ הַמְהֵלֵךְ<sup>3</sup>

עַל־כְּנִפֵּי־רוּחַ:

<sup>4</sup> עֲשֵׂה מְלֹאכֵי רוּחוֹת מִשְׁרָתֵי אֵשׁ לְהֵט:

<sup>5</sup> יִסֹּר־אֶרֶץ עַל־מְכוּנֶיהָ בַּל־תִּמּוּט עוֹלָם וְעַד:

<sup>6</sup> תְּהוּם כָּל־בוֹשׁ כְּסִיתוֹ עַל־הָרִים יַעֲמְדוּ־מִים:

<sup>7</sup> מִן־גִּעְרָתָךְ יִנוֹסוּן מִן־קוֹל רַעֲמְךָ יִחַפְּזוּן:

<sup>8</sup> יַעֲלוּ הָרִים יִרְדּוּ בִקְעוֹת אֶל־מְקוֹם זֶה יִסְרֹת לָהֶם:

<sup>9</sup> גְּבוּל־שָׁמַיִת בַּל־יַעֲבְרוּן בַּל־יִשׁוּבוּן לְכִסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ:

<sup>10</sup> הַמְשַׁלַּח מַעֲיָנִים בְּנַחֲלִים בֵּין הָרִים יִהְלִכוּן:

<sup>11</sup> יִשְׁקוּ כָּל־חֵיתוֹ שָׂדֵי יִשְׁבְּרוּ פְּרָאִים צִמָּאִם:

<sup>12</sup> עָלֵיהֶם עוֹף־הַשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁכּוּן מִבֵּין עֲפָאִים יִתְנוּ־קוֹל:

<sup>13</sup> מִשְׁקָה הָרִים מַעֲלִיּוֹתָיו מִפְּרִי מַעֲשִׂיד תִּשְׁבַּע הָאָרֶץ:

<sup>14</sup> מִצִּמְיֹת חֲצִיר לִבְהֶמָה וְעֵשֶׂב לַעֲבֹדַת הָאָדָם לְהוֹצִיא

לֶחֶם מִן־הָאָרֶץ:

<sup>15</sup> וַיֵּין יִשְׁמַח לִב־אָנוּשׁ לְהַצְהִיל פָּנִים מִשֶּׁמֶן וְלֶחֶם

לִב־אָנוּשׁ יִסְעֹד:

<sup>16</sup> יִשְׁבְּעוּ עֲצֵי יְהוָה אֲרָזִי לְבָנוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַע:

<sup>17</sup> אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם צִפְרִים יִקְנְנוּ חֲסִידָה בְּרוּשִׁים בֵּיתָה:

<sup>18</sup> הָרִים הַגְּבוּהִים לִיעֲלִים סִלְעִים מַחֲסֶה לַשִּׁפְנִים:

<sup>19</sup> עֲשֵׂה יָרֵחַ לְמוֹעֲדִים שֶׁמֶשׁ יָדַע מְבוֹאוֹ:

<sup>20</sup> תִּשְׁתַּחֲשֹׁד וַיְהִי לַיְלָה בּוֹ־תִרְמָשׁ כָּל־חֵיתוֹ־יַעַר:

<sup>21</sup> הַכְּפִירִים שְׁאֲנִים לְטָרֵף וּלְבָקָשׁ מֵאֵל אֲכָלָם:

<sup>22</sup> תִּזְרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יֹאסִפּוֹן וְאֶל־מַעֲוֹנָתָם יִרְבְּצוּן:

<sup>23</sup> יֵצֵא אָדָם לַפַּעֲלוֹ וְלַעֲבֹדָתוֹ עַד־יַעֲרֹב:

<sup>24</sup> מִה־רִבּוֹ מַעֲשִׂיד יְהוָה כָּל־ם בְּחִכְמָה עֲשִׂית מְלָאכָה הָאָרֶץ

קִנְיָנָךְ:

<sup>25</sup> זֶה הַיָּם גָּדוֹל וְרֹחַב יָדָיִם שָׁם־רָמַשׁ וְאֵין מִסְפָּר חַיּוֹת

קְטָנוֹת עִם־גְּדֹלוֹת:

<sup>26</sup> שֵׁם אֲנִיּוֹת יִהְלִכוּן לִוְיָתָן זֶה־יִצְרֹת לְשַׁחֲקֶבֶד:

<sup>27</sup> כָּל־ם אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּן לְתֵת אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ:

<sup>28</sup> תִּתֵּן לָהֶם יִלְקְטוּן תַּפְתַּח יָדְךָ יִשְׁבְּעוּן טוֹב:

<sup>29</sup> תִּסְתִּיר פָּנֶיךָ יִבְהַלּוּן תִּסָּף רוּחָם יִגּוּעוּן וְאֶל־עַפְרָם

יִשׁוּבוּן:

<sup>30</sup> תִּשְׁלַח רוּחְךָ יִבְרָאוּן וְתַחֲדָשׁ פָּנֵי אֲדָמָה:

<sup>31</sup> יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה לַעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׂיו:

<sup>32</sup> הַמִּבֵּיט לָאָרֶץ וְתִרְעַד יָגַע בַּהָרִים וַיַּעֲשֵׂנוּ:

אֲשִׁירָה לִיהוָה בְּחַיִּי אֲזַמְּרָה לֵאלֹהֵי בְּעוֹרַי: <sup>33</sup>  
 יַעֲרֹב עָלָיו שִׁיחִי אֲנֹכִי אֲשַׁמֵּחַ בִּיהוָה: <sup>34</sup>  
 יִתְמֹוּ חַטָּאִים מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְרָשָׁעִים עוֹד אֵינָם בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי <sup>35</sup>  
 אֶת־יְהוָה הַלְלוּ־יָהּ:

# Colossians 1:15-20<sup>409</sup>

<sup>15</sup> ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, <sup>16</sup> ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὀρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται· <sup>17</sup> καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν, <sup>18</sup> καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας· ὃς ἐστὶν ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, ἵνα γένηται ἐν πασιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων, <sup>19</sup> ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι <sup>20</sup> καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν, εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ, [δι' αὐτοῦ] εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

<sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. <sup>24</sup> Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, <sup>25</sup> of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, <sup>26</sup> the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. <sup>27</sup> To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup> Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup> For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

<sup>409</sup> All Greek texts are taken from the BGT Version as found in BibleWorks.

## Glossary of Vedic and Hindu terms

**āpah** – primordial waters referred to in the RV X.129

**Āraṇyakas** – Post-*Samhitā* and post-*Brāhmaṇa* texts focusing on sacrificial rites and the inmost nature of man.

**asat** – non-being/non-Existence

**Atharva-Veda** – The last of the *Samhitās*. Function as a manual for the priests

**Brāhman** – According to Hindu philosophers, this being is the ultimate supreme. AV X.7 claims this being as *Skambha*.

**Brāhmaṇas** – Post-*Samhitā* texts written as theological manuals for the *Brāhmins*

**Brāhmins** – the highest caste, having been created from the *Puruṣa* man's head.

**Ekam** – literally means 'one'. Refers to the original One that arose in RV X.129.

**Hiraṇyagarbha** – literally 'golden germ' The name for RV X.121, the hymn that describes its arising.

**Indra** - One of the Vedic deities. Is celebrated in the *Ṛg-Veda* as well as other Vedic texts. He rides a golden chariot and is credited in some hymns as creator.

**Ka** – Literally means 'Who'. Is often used as the name for *Prajāpati*.

**Kalpa** – the cycle of the universe, according to the Vedic texts, lasting 8.649 billion years.

**Kāma** – love or desire. One of the first things to stir in creation

**maṇḍalas** – a symbolical diagram that is to be meditated on. The hymns of the *Ṛg-Veda* are also known by this name, hence their spiritual significance.

**Mahābhārata** – One of the two great epics of the Hindus, the other being the *Rāmāyana*. It consists of 220,000 lines and includes the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

**Nāsadiya Sūkta** – the name for *Ṛg-Veda* X.129. Literally means 'from the first words'.

**Nyāya** – One of the six orthodox schools of Hinduism. It is primarily concerned with logic and thought patterns.

**Pradhāna** – insentient, lacking consciousness

**Prajāpati** – Literally means ‘Lord of Creatures or Creation ‘s King’. In early Vedic texts this term is a title. In later texts it takes on the name of a particular deity. In some texts, *Prajāpati* is credited with creation.

**Pūraṇas** – a portion of the *smṛti* texts. They present material in legends, myths and stories, There are 18 great *Pūraṇas*.

**Puruṣa Sūkta** – literally means ‘man’ This is the name of a hymn, RV X.90, describing a giant primordial man who is dissected to provide the substance of creation.

**Rāmānuja** - a Tamil Brāhmin philosopher who lived in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. His philosophical system is known as the visistadvaita. He claimed the individual soul was a fragment of the Supreme Being but not identical.

**Ṛg-Veda** – the oldest of the *Samhitās*. It contains 10 *maṇḍalas* consisting of 152,836 words and 432,000 syllables. These hymns were originally meant to be chanted. *ṛsis* – refers to the original poets who first saw/heard the *śruti* texts.

**Śankara** – a 9<sup>th</sup> century Hindu philosopher. His philosophical system is known as advaita Vedanta in which he propounds the supremacy of Brāhman and the ultimate oneness of all essence as Brāhman Itself.

**Sāma-Veda - The third Samhitā** consisting of 1549 verses. All but 75 are duplicates of the *Ṛg-Veda*. They contain instructions for Soma sacrifice.

**Samhitās** – the oldest *śruti* texts consisting of the *Ṛg-Veda*, *Sāma-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda*.

**Sanātana** – literally, ‘eternal or ancient’. Many Hindus prefer this word to refer to their religion in place of the word Hinduism.

**sat** – Being or Existence

**Skambha** – literally means ‘support’ or ‘pillar’. This is the title of the primordial being described in AV X.7.

**smṛti** – literally means ‘that which is being remembered’. This refers to the sacred texts that are second in importance under the *śruti*,

**Soma** – the name of an intoxicating drink that is pressed from a plant. It is first found in heaven and is drink by the gods. It is used in sacrificial ceremonies.

**śruti** – Literally, ‘that which is being heard’. This refers to the highest layer of sacred texts which are believed to have been ‘heard’ by the *ṛsis*

**Sūtras** – Authoritative Hindu texts

**Śvetaketu** – the young pupil with whom the reader of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad VI* learns.

**Tapas** – literally means ‘burning’. Reflects the Vedic notion of heat often caused by suffering or sexual activity.

**tat tvam asi** - ‘Thou Art That’ – this is the climactic saying of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad VI* which is repeated to Śvetaketu as he learns the common underlying thread of the universe.

**Upaniṣads** – literally means ‘near sitting’; is also known as the ‘end of the vedas’. They consist of discourses to pupils and are considered the philosophical meditations on the previous portions of the Vedas.

**Vaiśeṣikas** – One of the six orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy. In it reality is reduced to the smallest possible ‘atomic division’. They claim no prior existence to the creation of any product.

**Yajur-Veda** – The second of the *Samhitās* which serves as a priestly handbook.